

Police in nationwide inquiry over alleged £8m home loans fraud

By Mark Ellis

An alleged mortgage fraud involving home loans worth up to £8 million is being investigated by Thames Valley Police and it was revealed yesterday that a solicitor interviewed by detectives has resigned from his practice.

A report is being prepared for the Director of Public Prosecutions after months of inquiries into claims that applications for home mortgages were submitted to building societies all over Britain with fake legal documents and involving fictitious families. Police refused to name the solicitor from the Thames Valley area, but said they had interviewed a letting agent from Berkshire, an insurance broker from Hampshire, an accountant from Berkshire and a mortgage broker from London.

Up to 200 properties in

London and the Thames Valley are said to be involved and the total amount of loan money is estimated to be almost £8 million.

A Thames Valley police spokesman said: "Our inquiries are taking us all over the country and we have collected a mountain of paperwork and forms, which we are now studying and photocopying. It is a very complex inquiry and it will take us several weeks to complete. We shall then submit a report to the DPP."

No one has been charged but the police say prosecutions are likely to follow when inquiries are completed. The investigation began in November last year and involves mortgage applications dating back to January 1985.

The alleged fraud is claimed to involve false mortgage applications, using fictitious

names, to various building societies, but the houses involved were real and some had unsuspecting families living in them.

Other properties were genuinely being sold, but it is claimed false applications for mortgages were running parallel to real requests for loans. Building societies did not discover the alleged fraud because loan forms were backed by documents and surveys.

A spokesman for the Building Societies Association said lenders would not notice false claims as the word of a solicitor would be accepted without checks. He said building societies suffered negligible losses through fraud as in most cases they are able to recover the money through repossession of property or retrieving the advance.

Man dies at Boy George's house

By Michael Horsnell

Boy George, the pop singer who has undergone treatment for heroin addiction, was awaiting police questioning last night after the death of an American musician and songwriter at his home in Hampstead, north London.

Michael Rudetski, aged 27, from New York, was found dead on the lounge floor by Mr Kevin O'Dowd, the singer's brother, early yesterday, less than two days after arriving in Britain to help Boy George work on new songs.

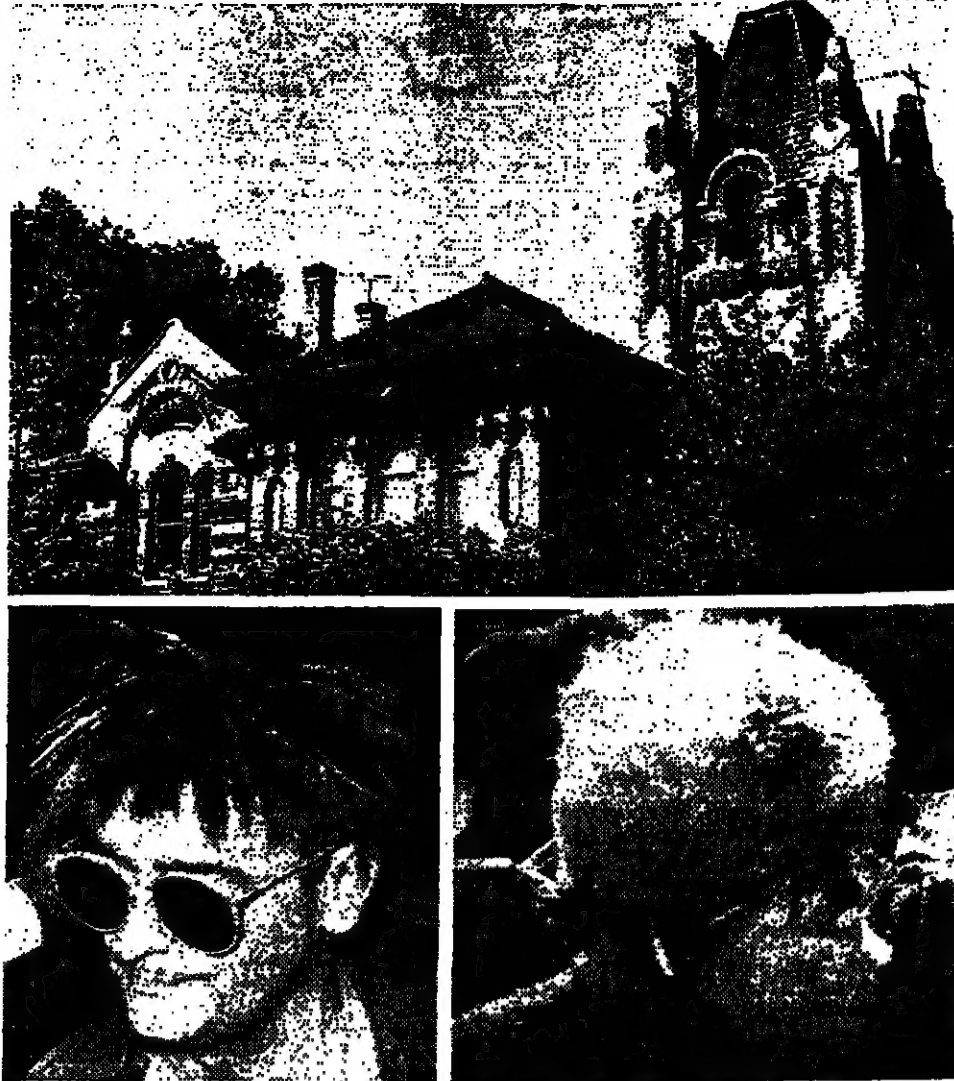
An inquest will be opened today at St Pancras coroners' court after a post mortem examination at St Pancras mortuary revealed that the young keyboard player died from respiratory failure due to an intake of drugs.

Police said that the finding was subject to substances being taken from the body for analysis.

A spokesman added: "The death is not being treated as suspicious at this stage. Members of the family will be questioned and Boy George is a member of the family. No one is being sought. No one has been arrested and no one is in custody."

It is likely that the singer, who was not present at the house in Well Road the night of Mr Rudetski's death, will be questioned at his other London home in Abercorn Close, St John's Wood.

The body was discovered fully clothed just after 4.30 am by Mr O'Dowd, who is facing charges with three others of supplying heroin to the Cul-



The house where Mr Rudetski was found (top), Mr Kevin O'Dowd (left) and Boy George

ture Club singer, after he had returned from the Limelight Club in the west end.

Mr Rudetski, whose body is expected to be flown home to the United States after the opening of the inquest, is understood to have complained of feeling unwell.

Boy George, who has battled to overcome his own heroin addiction, was fined £250 last month for possession of the drug.

Mr O'Dowd, who has been charged in Belfast with conspiring to murder Mr Kenneth Shimeld, a Civil Servant, and cause an explosion.

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Minister faces quiz on murder case man

Mr Alan Dukes, the Irish Minister for Justice, was yesterday ordered to provide the High Court in Dublin with reasons for the continued detention of a man wanted in Belfast on terrorist charges.

The case arises out of evidence from Harry Kirkpatrick, the Irish National Liberation Army "supergrass".

John O'Reilly, aged 26, of Eliza Street, Belfast, was arrested in the Irish Republic last October. A local district court later ruled that he should be extradited to Belfast to face accusations of conspiracy to murder and cause an explosion.

Mr Rex Mackey, counsel for Mr O'Reilly, claimed in the High Court that his client's arrest and detention in the high security prison at Portlaoise, Co Laois, was unlawful.

He said extradition warrants issued against Mr O'Reilly by Belfast crown court in January 1985 were defective.

Mr Justice John Blaney directed the Justice Minister to explain why Mr O'Reilly was being held and adjourned the case for a week.

Mr O'Reilly has been charged in Belfast with conspiring to murder Mr Kenneth Shimeld, a Civil Servant, and cause an explosion.

Masons deny Stalker link

By Peter Davenport

Officials of the freemasons society, accused in the past of obsessive secrecy, called a press conference yesterday to deny any involvement by their organization in the Stalker case.

Journalists and television cameras were invited into the Masonic Temple in Manchester of the East Lancashire Province of the freemasons.

Officials said that they had decided on the step after allegations in the news media suggesting a masonic link in the suspension of Mr John Stalker, deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester, and his removal from an inquiry into an alleged shoot-to-kill policy by the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

They were also concerned at allegations that Mr Norman Briggs, chairman of the Greater Manchester Police Authority and thus closely involved in the Stalker case, had been a freemason.

Mr Briggs, a Labour councillor, collapsed and died a week after the allegations were first published. They were strongly denied yesterday by his family and the freemasons.

Yesterday, Mr Colin Gregory, provincial grand secretary of the East Lancashire Province of the freemasons which has 17,000 members, denied that the organization had been involved in any way in the Stalker case.

He said that "from about the third week in June the media has said to itself: 'Ah! It

must be the freemasons. They are responsible for the situation in which Mr Stalker finds himself."

He said the allegations implied that the freemasons were "some sinister organization in cahoots with the RUC" and had tried to get Mr Stalker removed from the inquiry. He had no evidence of this.

Mr Gregory refused to divulge the number of policemen in the Greater Manchester force who belong to the organization, or how many senior officers are members.

Asked if he would investigate to see if any individuals had misused their membership of the organization in the Stalker case, Mr Gregory said he was not prepared to act on hearsay.

Thatcher will have sling for month

By Philip Webster, Chief Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister was recovering quickly last night after a successful, hour-long operation on her right hand.

Mrs Margaret Thatcher had surgery at 8 am yesterday for Dupuytren's contracture, the condition which has been pulling the small finger of her right hand into the palm.

By mid-afternoon she was reading government papers and initiating them with her non-writing left hand.

The operation at the private King Edward VII Hospital for officers in central London was performed by Mr Donald Brooks, a consultant surgeon. Downing Street said that

Mrs Thatcher's medical advisers were satisfied with the way the operation had gone. She was making good progress.

Mrs Thatcher's staff were keeping a tally of bouquets from well-wishers which has passed 20 by late afternoon. She is expected to stay in hospital until tomorrow.

Peacock to press for pay as you view TV

By Gavin Bell, Arts Correspondent

Members of the Peacock committee on broadcasting will urge Mr Douglas Hurd, Home Secretary, to take the first technical steps towards "pay as you view" television, at a meeting early next month.

The meeting coincides with active government consideration of the Peacock recommendations for creating a free market broadcasting system dictated by the consumer.

Committee members said yesterday they hoped to persuade Mr Hurd to press ahead with the purely technical preparations for cable and satellite networks, while some of their more controversial recommendations were being evaluated.

The first step advocated by the Peacock report was for all new television sets sold or rented in the UK to be adapted to receive direct subscription services by 1988.

About 18 per cent of sets now being sold already have the special sockets and associated electronics. The cost is estimated at £25, but viewers would also need a decoder, costing about £50.

The aim is to give subscribers freedom of choice between any number of programmes,

beamed directly into their homes by satellite and cable networks.

The initial phase would also involve creating a national fibre optic grid for a multiplicity of television and business communications.

Mr Samuel Brittan, a committee member and assistant editor of the *Financial Times*, said: "I will be suggesting to Mr Hurd that the pay socket and fibre optic recommendations be implemented quickly."

He would also be putting the case for increasing the proportion of programmes supplied by independent producers, in spite of opposition from the BBC and the independent television companies.

Mr Jeremy Hardie, another member of the committee, said: "Adapting television sets for the future and setting up the national grid is the key to the whole thing. It is important to get the technology in place."

Professor Peacock said he would like to discuss with Mr Hurd some of the more constructive criticisms that have been made of his committee's report.

Sinn Fein MP defends Provos' death threats

Continued from page 1

Richard Pascoe, General Officer commanding in the province and pledged that all steps would be taken to ensure repairs were carried out to security bases.

Before travelling to Dublin where he had talks with Dr Garret FitzGerald, Mr King appealed to the community to reject the threats from a "small bunch of thugs and terrorists who are increasingly isolated."

Leading industrialists in the province will discuss the threat and its implications at a meeting on Monday but it is clear that organizations representing business and the trade unions are being extremely cautious in comments they make on the issue.

The dilemma facing both

Government and industrialists is that while they recognize the enormous worry the threats have caused they do not wish to give more publicity to the Provisionals or to breathe defiance at the terrorists for fear of provoking violent attacks.

The Government accepts that it is impossible to provide security for everyone now under threat, though officials have been given a list of men prepared to carry out the work by the Democratic Unionist Party. Mr Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the DUP, said: "There will be many individuals presently unemployed who will say to themselves 'I'm prepared to stand up to the Provos'."

Two share lead in chess titles

By Harry Golombek, Chess Correspondent

After eight rounds of the British Chess Championship at Southampton, grandmasters Jonathan Speelman and Jonathan Mestel are leading with 6½ points each. International master Daniel King is third with 6 points, half a point ahead of grandmaster Murray Chandler, international master Glenn Flear, Neil McDonald, Michael Adams and David Prasad.

Jonathan Speelman defeated Murray Chandler, who had the better position but failed to play the correct line, and Jonathan Mestel won convincingly against the youngest player, Michael Adams, aged 14.

In the women's championship Susan Arkell leads with 7½ points, 2 ahead of Christine Flear.

Correction

The percentages of people found to be vegetarian this year in a Gallup poll reported on July 29 should have read 2.1 per cent for men, 3.4 per cent for all women and 6.2 per cent for women aged between 16 and 24. All the figures were higher than in the previous two years. This year 3.1 per cent of adults said they were eating less red meat, compared with 2.6 per cent last year.

By the way, the names of the winners of the 1986 British Chess Championship are: Men's: Jonathan Speelman and Jonathan Mestel (6½ points); Daniel King (6 points); Murray Chandler (5½ points); Glenn Flear (5½ points); Neil McDonald (5½ points); Michael Adams (5½ points); David Prasad (5½ points). Women's: Susan Arkell (7½ points); Christine Flear (5½ points).

Drugs ruse to boost grouse

By Hugh Clayton, Environment Correspondent

Pills disguised as grit may be used to persuade grouse to swallow drugs which could tackle the decline of Britain's most famous native wild game bird.

The drugs have already worked in experimental efforts to control worm infestations. Worms are among the main threats to this year's shooting season, which begins next Tuesday on the "Glorious Twelfth".

The pills are described by Dr Peter Hudson, principal biologist with the North of England Grouse Research Project, in a report about a series of grouse experiments done since 1975. The Game Commission says 1975 was "the last good year for grouse".

Research has shown that the tiny worms which burrow through the sides of the gut of the birds are a prime culprit in the large annual fluctuations in grouse numbers and the remorseless decline over decades that is worrying landowners and their agents.

Dr Hudson says that grouse are so heavily infected by the worms that it is pointless to try to eradicate them. One bird can carry several thousand worms, and the best hope is to

try to reduce their numbers to tolerable levels. Drugs have proved effective, but it is not easy to persuade a wild bird like the grouse to swallow its prescribed dose.

Grouse swallow grit to help in the digestion of heather, their main food. Dr Hudson says the prospects of a "grit pill" are to be tested. "It may be possible to place such pills on the piles of grit used by grouse and so control worm burdens at the critical time."

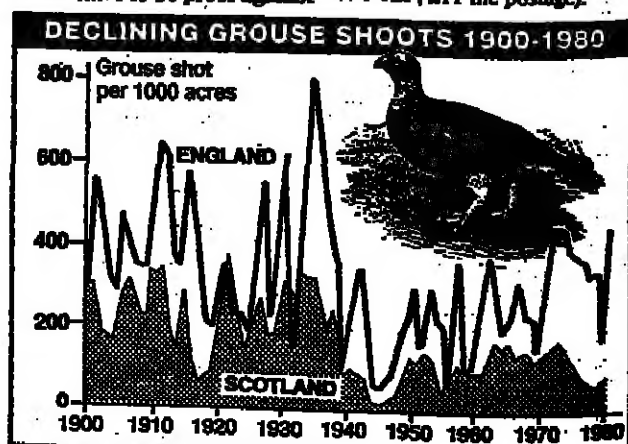
But there is often so much grit about that it would be hard to make sure that the birds would find the pills, which would have to be proof against

being dissolved by rain but capable of steady digestion.

If the birds are full of worms they lay fewer eggs in the spring and their young are less likely to survive.

Worm infection can damage the lining of the gut and make it harder for the birds to absorb the nutrients necessary to survive. Worm eggs reach the ground in grouse droppings, and once hatched the young worms climb to the tips of the heather where they are eaten alive by the grouse.

Red Grouse: Biology and Management (Game Commission, Fordingbridge, Hants SP6 1EP; £11 inc postage).



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Growing concern over computer sabotage by disgruntled staff

By Bill Johnston, Technology Correspondent

British security experts are becoming increasingly concerned about a wave of computer sabotage cases occurring at the hands of disgruntled employees, which have caused irreparable damage worth millions of pounds to computer systems, resulting in some companies going bankrupt.

In these instances a company's computer system is illicitly programmed with damaging commands which are obeyed long after the "saboteur" has left the company's employment. Typically the illegal programs are triggered at a particular time or when a set of circumstances occur.

These logic time bombs, as they are now termed, can inflict such serious damage on companies that they go out of business. Recent incidents of this novel form of sabotage have destroyed valuable company records, sales invoicing files, lists of clients and other fundamental information for running a modern business.

According to Dr Ken Wong, computer security expert from

consultants BIS Applied Systems, about 15 big sabotage incidents have surfaced recently and in a third of the cases the companies concerned have stopped trading. The principal problem is that there is no check on the changes made by some computer programmers.

"He can be making an illegal change as well as an authorized one," Dr Wong says.

The logic time bomb is also being used, experts say, by cynical self-employed maintenance programmers and analysts, who ensure a computer system hiccups frequently and generates work for them in the process.

The disclosure follows in the wake of mounting concern in the insurance industry that banks and financial institutions in the UK will again lose millions through electronic fraud this year. The level of loss is never disclosed since very few computer fraudsters are ever prosecuted because of a fear of publicity. A special unit has been created

within Scotland Yard to encourage prosecution, but still much is kept secret.

A more sophisticated form of the logic time bomb has just been unveiled in the United States. This type of sabotage is called a computer virus - the computer is programmed so that the illicit instructions can themselves generate further illicit and damaging instructions.

Reports this week from the United States claim that the computer networks which control everything from banking to air traffic control are vulnerable to attack from terrorists or saboteurs using these methods, although no occurrences were reported.

A recently-published report from a group of security experts attached to Georgetown University in Washington concluded that both military computer networks and the automated banking networks, where millions of dollars are transferred electronically around the world in seconds, are open to "catastrophic collapse".

Jealousy denied by games mistress

Jayne Scott, a physical education teacher, denied that she felt jealous of the relationship between her deputy headmistress and her lover, the lesbian love triangle trial at the Central Criminal Court was told yesterday.

She also denied any sexual relationship with either woman, a detective told the jury.

Miss Scott is alleged to have attacked Miss Susan Craker with a claw hammer because she discovered she had slept with her lover, Mrs Debbie Fox.

Miss Craker, aged 35, who was deputy head of Slough and Eton Secondary School at the time, is now crippled and brain damaged.

Miss Scott, aged 30, of Croft Road, Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire, denies causing and inflicting grievous bodily harm on Miss Craker in August last year.

Detective Constable Joseph McGabran said that when he questioned Miss Scott, she denied being jealous of the relationship between Mrs Fox and Miss Craker.

When he asked her if there was a sexual relationship between her and either of the two women she allegedly replied: "No, I am seeing a married man."

At the time of the attack Miss Scott said she and Mrs Fox were spending the weekend at Miss Craker's home in Barnet, Hertfordshire.

The passion had gone out of Miss Scott's affair with Mrs Fox.

Mrs Fox had recently slept with Miss Craker and when Miss Scott found out she was upset. She had also appealed to Miss Craker to give up the romance, but the jury has been told, she said she would not be intimidated.

Det Con McGabran said he

suggested that Miss Scott was trying to make out that an intruder had attacked Miss Craker whereas she was the real culprit.

Miss Scott allegedly replied: "I have no reason to fabricate. I am not the person responsible. I never tell lies."

"I did not strike her with the hammer. I cannot strike anyone with my hand let alone a heavy object."

Before being interrupted by the judge, Mr Richard Cherrill, for the defence, mentioned some unsolved crimes and said attacks where the assailant had not been caught should not be eliminated from police inquiries into Miss Craker's case.

He asked Det Con McGabran about the murder of Mrs Ann Lock, whose body was found by the railway line near Hadley Wood, north London. The officer replied that the identity of her assailant was unknown.

Mr Cherrill then asked him about Patrick Reilly, who was sentenced to life imprisonment earlier this year for a series of rapes. The officer agreed that one of the attacks involved a hammer.

The judge, Mr Recorder Morland, asked him if there was anything to suggest Miss Craker had been subjected to a sexual assault. The officer told him there was not. Mr Cherrill was asking about an unsolved rape case when the judge interrupted him.

Det Con McGabran said police found about four or five fingerprints which could not identify in Miss Craker's home.

Det Insp Martin Herdridge said there were no similarities between the attack on Miss Craker and the murder of Mrs Lock.

The trial continues today.

Man faces six murder charges

A man aged 23 who faces three murder charges, including two in Stockwell, south London, appeared in court yesterday accused of murdering a further three old people and attempting to murder a fourth.

Kenneth Erskine was remanded in custody by South Western magistrates in London until August 13, but will not appear in court until August 27. There was no application for bail.

The hearing took less than a minute and the charges were not read out. It was Mr Erskine's third appearance in court since last week. He was remanded into police custody on the previous occasions, but yesterday was remanded to prison.

Mr Erskine faced four new charges yesterday. They were: that on June 28 at Somerville Hastings House, Stockwell, he murdered Mr Valentine Gleim, aged 84, and at the same place and time he murdered Mr Zbigniew Szabrawa, aged 94; that on or before April 9 at West Hill Road, Putney, south-west London, he murdered Miss Irene Emms, aged 78; that on June 27, in Stockwell, he attempted to murder a man aged 73.

At a previous hearing he was charged with the murders of Mrs Janet Cockett, aged 67, of Overton Road Estate, Stockwell, last May; and Mr William Downs, aged 74, of the same estate, last month. He was also charged with the murder of Mr William Carmen, aged 82, of Clephane Road, Islington, north London.

Reporting restrictions were not lifted.

More private houses built

By Christopher Warman, Property Correspondent

Private house building is increasing and the forecast looks promising, according to figures from the National House-Building Council.

The latest figures show that starts in the second quarter of 1986 are 13 per cent higher than for the same period last year and during the first six months are 8 per cent up.

The total starts for the first six months is 91,700, while completions during the same period are 81,500, 8 per cent up on last year.

Mr Basil Dean, director-general of the NHBC, said the late spring may have delayed some starts until the second quarter, "but the good quarterly figures are backed up by

the completions figures for the quarter and the half year".

"It begins to look likely that our prediction of 150,000 starts for the year will prove to have been over-cautious."

House-building figures from the Department of the Environment show that in June 1986, the provisional estimate of starts in the public and private sectors is 20,500 compared with 17,800 in June 1985, while completions numbered 16,200 compared with 15,500 in June last year.

In the second quarter, total starts on a seasonally adjusted basis were 7 per cent up on the first quarter and 6 per cent up on the second quarter of 1985.

While starts and completions in the private sector are showing an increase, the situation is less healthy in the public sector. The DoE says that public sector starts were up 7 per cent on the previous quarter but 7 per cent lower than a year earlier; completions were down by 2 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.

The NHBC says that figures for the market share of timber frame houses are beginning to indicate that loss of confidence in that form of construction has bottomed out.

After reaching a peak of 24 per cent in Britain in 1983 it declined after adverse publicity to 7 per cent in the first quarter of this year.



"The Scrubs", a pop group made up of three prison officers and three inmates serving life sentences at Wormwood Scrubs Prison, has made a recording, profits from which will go to Ethiopian famine relief and to needy pensioners in west London (Photograph: Suresh Karadia).

Societies preferred by buyers

More young people would prefer to use a building society for house conveyancing than a solicitor, according to a survey published by The Building Societies Association (BSA) today (Christopher Warman writes).

The survey shows that, if costs were equal, 50 per cent of people aged 20-24 would be likely to use a building society for conveyancing compared with 33 per cent using and solicitor and 12 per cent a bank. For other age groups up to 54, the building society is popular, while overall the choice is 38 per cent for building societies, 40 per cent for solicitors and 12 per cent for banks.

The figures emerge from market research which examines the changing market for house-buying services, and looks forward to the implementation of the Building Societies Act which will allow societies to offer a house-buying package including estate agency services, conveyancing, structural surveys, arranging insurance and personal loans.

Forty-one per cent of respondents said they would use a building society for estate agency services, compared with 26 per cent choosing estate agents, and 28 per cent would use a society to arrange insurance, rising to 43 per cent in the 20-24 age group. For a personal loan, 26 per cent would use a society, rising to 43 per cent in the 20-24 age group.

Mr Mark Boleat, deputy secretary general of the Association, said: "People find house purchase a daunting process. The survey confirms that building societies are well placed to offer a package of house-buying services."

Teachers to give warning on Aids

By Mark Dowd

A circular issued yesterday by the Department of Education on sex education in schools recommends the inclusion of such topics as Aids, abortion and homosexuality and other "matters about which people have strongly held views".

Carrying a warning that teachers should take great care with such issues, the document, which is being sent to local authorities, teaching unions and churches for comment, states that the topics feature regularly in the media and are widely discussed.

After the successful House of Lords amendment to the Education Bill, which prescribed that sex education should inculcate "moral considerations and the value of family life", the circular represents an attempt to steer a course between liberal and conservative views.

Every primary and secondary school, it says, should develop a sex education policy, with parents being given a chance to comment on the teaching materials used.

Furthermore, teachers should warn pupils against the emotional and physical risks of promiscuity in any instruction, emphasizing the significance of moral values.

In giving advice, teachers should not "trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights".

The circular also states that "the circumstances in which the Law Lords considered it might be justifiable for a doctor to offer contraceptive advice and treatment to a girl under 16 without knowledge and consent of her parents do not have a parallel in school education".

The document was greeted favourably by Mr David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers.

Boy's '18 months of cruelty'

By A Staff Reporter

Darwyn Day, a stern father, subjected the son of the woman with whom he was living to 18 months of cruelty at their home in Cotswold Gloucestershire Crown Court was told yesterday.

He made Craig Day, aged four, stand on a chair for long periods with his hands above his head as a punishment, the court was told.

Mr Elifon Winrow Thomas, for the prosecution, said Mr Day hit the boy as he stood perched on the chair.

When the boy's mother reported the incident to the police they found bruises down the child's right hand side.

Mr Day, aged 21, of Doverow Avenue, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, denies charges of assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

Family's 'insane' dilemma

A homeless family who want to leave their £165-a-week bed and breakfast guest house for a £40-a-week bed and breakfast but cannot because it is too expensive.

An anomaly between the DHSS and their local council means that taxpayers have to pick up a bill four times larger than necessary to keep a family of four in accommodation they do not want.

Mr Bernard Dawkins, an unemployed mechanic, and his wife Valerie, both aged 47, found themselves homeless after moving to Hemel Hempstead in search of work and then returning to their home town of Newton Abbot, South Devon a few months later.

For almost two months they have been trying to find somewhere other than the Keridon guest house in Torquay Road, Newton Abbot, for themselves and their son Robert, aged 16 and Lee, aged seven.

The problem is that if they move out of the guest house they come under the rules of housing benefit, run by the local Torridge Council, rather than under the DHSS who now pay their board and lodging.

Mr Dawkins explained: "We found ourselves a caravan for £66-a-week and we were really excited, but then we went to the council and they said that would be far too much."

"Then we found a one-bedroom house for £40-a-week but we were told that was also too expensive. It's insane."

Mr John Topping, who is in charge of housing benefit at the council, said: "The trouble is we are dealing with two different bits of legislation."

"There is an anomaly in the law, and I recognize it is a nonsense as every taxpayer must do, but there is another piece of legislation which says no."

A DHSS spokesman said: "We are only responsible for paying for temporary accommodation. We have no influence over the policies of local authorities."

Gurkha tells of cash offer to smuggle drugs

A former Gurkha private offered £500 to a colleague still serving with the regiment to smuggle heroin back to Britain from Nepal, a court was told yesterday.

Rifleman Purnabhadur Gurung, aged 32, told customs officers he was offered the cash by Mr Bijaya Jung Gurung, a former Gurkha, to smuggle more than £10,000 of the drug concealed in his body. Isleworth Crown Court was told.

Mr Robert Lake, a customs officer, told the court that Mr Purnabhadur Gurung admitted concealing the package when he was questioned at Heathrow last August. He was one of 80 Gurkha soldiers returning to their base near Aldershot after 18 days' leave in Nepal.

He denied knowledge of a further £143,185 worth of heroin concealed in his suitcase.

Mr Purnabhadur Gurung has pleaded not guilty to smuggling heroin worth £153,495 into Britain.

Three other serving Gurkhas - Madan Kumar Shrestha, aged 26, Haure Rai, aged 24, and Reshambhadur Gurung, aged 31, have denied attempting to smuggle cannabis resin with a street value of £28,000.

Mr Lake said Mr Bijaya Jung Gurung met the 80 Gurkhas when their aircraft landed in Nepal and later visited Mr Purnabhadur Gurung's family home and asked him to carry heroin back to Britain in a suitcase.

When he refused, Mr Bijaya Gurung asked him to approach others to smuggle cases through customs. Mr Purnabhadur Gurung refused, but agreed to carry the small package of heroin which he concealed.

The case continues.

Raider 'copied method from TV programme'

A building society raider who was sentenced to four years' imprisonment yesterday was said to have got his ideas from watching the television programme, *Crimewatch* UK.

Carl Foster, aged 26, unemployed, of Sussex Street, Plymouth, admitted at Exeter Crown Court three charges of robbery involving a total of nearly £5,800. He was jailed for four years on each count, the sentences to run concurrently.

Mr Andrew Maitland, for the prosecution, said that Foster first struck at the National Provincial Building Society in Plymouth last December.

He wrapped the cardboard from inside a kitchen roll in a carrier bag, pretended it was a gun and made the cashier hand over £1,339.

In April at the Learnington Spa Building Society in Plymouth, he again pretended he had a gun and threatened to shoot the cashier. She handed over £530.

Two weeks later Foster raided the Yorkshire Building Society in Plymouth. Brandishing a replica gun he forced two cashiers to give him a total of £3,915.

Mr John Ballenden, for the defence, would not disclose in open court what prompted the raids.

But a detective said outside the court: "He was short of money and got the idea of raiding building societies from watching *Crimewatch* UK."

Mr Sam Organ, the programme's producer, said yesterday that he did not give credence to the claim. The programme is designed not to reveal security matters; we work closely with the police."

Singing debut on radio for Sean Connery

A cast of top actors and actresses is to star in a new drama series on Radio Three. *Barnes' People III*, a series of plays by Peter Barnes, will also mark the singing debut of Sean Connery, the former James Bond actor. He will be heard when he stars with John Hurt and Donald Pleasence in the first of the eight plays broadcast in a two-week season from August 18.

Each of the plays features a cast of three. Other trios include Bob Peck, David Suchet and David Warner; Ian Carmichael, Paul Eddington and Anna Massey; and veterans Rene Asherson, Wendy Hiller and Ann Todd.

The first *Barnes' People* was broadcast in 1981 and featured a series of monologues. *Barnes' People II*, heard two years ago on Radio Three, was a series of dialogues.

Mr Barnes said yesterday: "I don't think either films or television could assemble, or probably even afford, such a tremendous cast list."

Motorway food 'lot better'

By Robin Young

Motorway service areas had improved a lot since they were last inspected by the Consumers' Association in 1980 and since the relaxation of regulations which stifled competition, according to a report in *Which?*

Most now provided reasonable service and acceptable food, the inspectors concluded, after visiting all 56 areas on Britain's motorways (most of them twice), between February and June this year.

They nominated RoadChef's Killington Lake service area on the M6 the most attractive in Britain, "a pleasant and relaxing stop" where the scenic views were superb and the lavatories spotless, even if the food display in the restaurant was still "uninspiring".

Trusthouse Forte and Wellcome Break areas offered the best food, "of reasonable quality, varied and well-presented", the inspectors found. Granada's areas were the most consistently well-run, with good all-round standards.

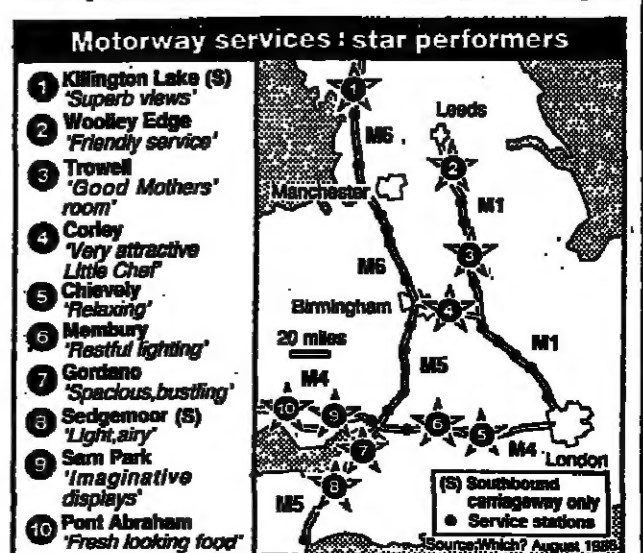
but RoadChef generally offered more limited facilities than their competitors, and Rank's areas were found less attractive and relaxing, with lower catering standards than other main chains.

Blue Bar and Kenning, with only two areas each, were said to have failed to keep pace with improvements elsewhere.

At Kenning's Anderton area on the M61 rows of bench seating and drab colours made the inspectors feel they had "stepped into a time-war".

Prices for food were not unreasonably higher than in off-motorway family restaurants, the report said.

Leading article, page 13



Wells brings back 1924 Paris fashion

Alan Wells looked, on his own admission, "like something out of the 1924 Olympic Games" (Pat Barnes writes).

That was a doubly appropriate appraisal of the retrograde fashion in running shorts that Wells, the 1980 Olympic 100 metres champion, was wearing in Gateshead on Tuesday.

For it was in the 1924 Olympics in Paris, background to the Oscar-winning *Chariots of Fire* that Harold Abrahams became the first, and only, other, Briton to win the Olympic sprint title.

But a closer inspection of Wells' "shorts" revealed that they were not the baggy Abrahams-style, but cyclists' skin tight pants.

Wells was wearing them for a lot more than their shock value. He was trying to protect the fragile hamstring which had kept him out of the Commonwealth Games.

Athletics, page 24



Alan Wells (left) at the finishing line at Gateshead on Tuesday, and Harold Abrahams, Olympic gold medalist in 1924.

£19,500 fine for pirate videos

A man who turned his home into a factory for producing pirate videos was fined £19,500 yesterday by Birmingham magistrates.

When trading standards officers raided the home of Syed Zaidi in Melville Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, they seized nearly 1,000 tapes and found sophisticated video equipment for producing high quality reproductions of Asian films, the court was told.

Zaidi was said to have been making about £20,000-a-year from his business.

Zaidi, aged 39, who admitted nine charges under the Trade Description Act and 11 under the Copyright Act, was fined £19,500 and ordered to pay £750 costs.

Cannabis plea fails in court

Bayia Dauvergne, aged 35, of Maids Vale, London, who was plagued by illnesses in the past but is now healthy claimed yesterday that the medicinal qualities of marijuana had worked wonders for him, but he was still fined £100 for growing a cannabis tree.

"It's a medicine tree," Bayia Dauvergne, who was born in the West Indies, told Marylebone court. "It's a crime in this country," retorted Mr Geoffrey Noel, the magistrate.

He was found guilty of dishonest conduct in making false statements to obtain a £7,000 loan and conduct which might have brought the profession into disrepute in failing to repay the loan.

Barrister is expelled

Mr Vishnising Tahliramani Haridas, a barrister, has been disbarred and expelled from Lincoln's Inn for professional misconduct, the Senate of the Inns of Court and the Bar announced yesterday.

He was found guilty of dishonest conduct in making false statements to obtain a £7,000 loan and conduct which might have brought the profession into disrepute in failing to repay the loan.

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'Python' star's operatic debut

Eric Idle, one of the stars of the *Monty Python* television series, who is also a playwright and songwriter, is to make his debut as an opera singer.

He will sing the role of Koko, the Lord High Executioner, in the English National Opera Company's new production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* which opens at the London Coliseum on September 27.

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Man of 54 on rape charge

A father of two daughters was accused at Hove Magistrates' Court yesterday of raping a girl aged eight at a south London church.

The unemployed man, aged 54, from Camberwell, south London, was remanded in custody until August 13, charged with the attack at Christchurch in Brixton Road, Stockwell, on Monday.

Remand in heroin case

Richard Milford Lundy, a tailor, aged 31, of Bronte House, Kilburn Park Road, Kilburn, north London, who appeared before magistrates at Hove yesterday, was remanded in custody for 24 hours to appear before South Western magistrates in a related case.

He is charged with supplying an unspecified amount of heroin to Andrew Gardner, on or before June 24 last.

Seven football fans remanded

Eight football supporters arrested after a testimonial match between Celtic and Arsenal appeared before Highbury magistrates in London yesterday.

Seven were remanded to various dates. Frederick Burns, aged 26, of Puddington, west London, was fined £200.

Boy killed on railway line

A boy aged 13 died from electric shock on a railway line at Peckham when he fell while searching for scrap metal on July 11, an inquest was told yesterday.

John Moran, of The Caravan Site, Hornsey Street, Peckham, slipped after climbing a fence with a friend aged 12. A train hit him and he died instantly of electrocution.

£4m appeal

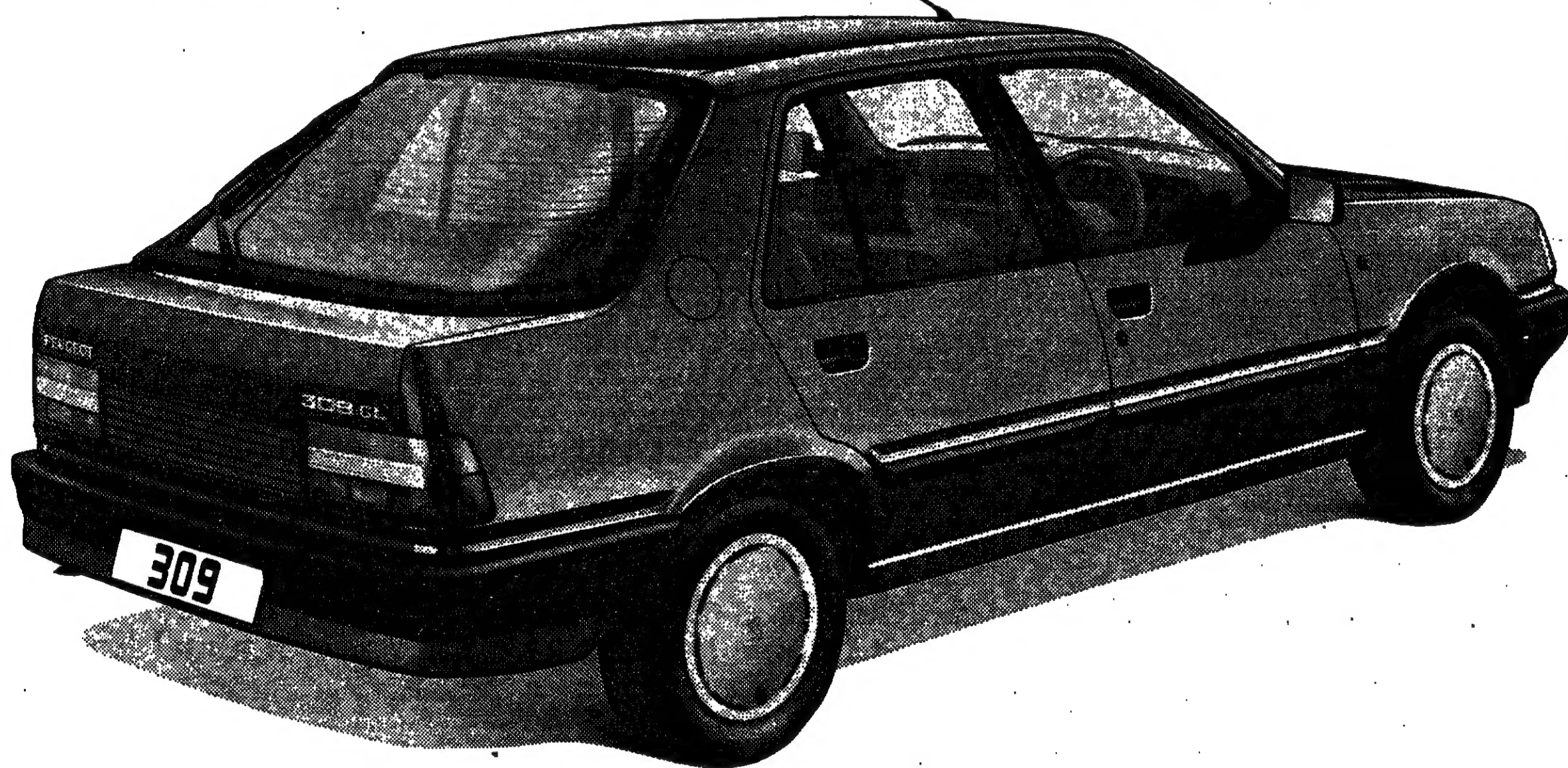
The Duke of Edinburgh is to be patron of a £4 million appeal to save Ely Cathedral in Cambridgeshire which is faced with crumbling stone-work and deathwatch beetle. The appeal is to be launched next month.

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APR	0%	9.4%	11.9%
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DEPOSIT (MIN 30%)	1958.96	1958.96	1958.96
REPAYMENT PERIOD	12 MTHS	24 MTHS	36 MTHS
FINANCE CHARGES	NIL	434.16	822.48
MONTHLY PAYMENTS	380.92	208.55	149.82
CUSTOMER SAVINGS Over credit provider's normal interest rates of 12% p.a. flat (33.9% apr)	548.52	662.88	822.96
TOTAL CREDIT PRICE	6530.00	6964.16	7352.48



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Teachers fear a severe cut in technical education

By Mark Dowd

Technical education in schools next year will be affected by a "severe cut" in government funding, Britain's largest teaching union said yesterday.

Mr Alan Evans, education officer with the National Union of Teachers, said that the transfer of the Government's Technical and Vocational Education Initiative from its present pilot status in 62 schools to a national programme next year will leave many schools under-resourced.

The principal aim of the initiative, which was set up in 1983 and involves just under 20,000 students, is to tailor the school curriculum to make it more relevant to industry and science.

The annual cost of the pilot projects for 1984-85 was about £30 million. The union says that only £20 million has been earmarked for when the scheme is extended nationally to all students aged 14 to 18.

The figures quoted by the union also suggest declining financial support for the pilot projects themselves with an average of £660,000 for each one in 1983, falling to £400,000 a year later.

"It is obvious," Mr Evans said, "that the money the Government is intending to provide for the extension of the initiative will mean far less for each school than has been available during the pilot phases."

Yesterday's warning comes in the wake of the advice given to the Government by the Manpower Services Commission, which runs the initiative, that the level of funding for the national extension was "light".

Mr Evans also expressed his concern that the transfer was premature. "It is surely not educationally sound to make assumptions about the success of a pilot study before any proper evaluation has been carried out."

Red phone boxes saved for nation

By Trudi McIntosh

Eight of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's cast-iron, red telephone kiosks were listed yesterday as buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

Lord Elton, Minister of State for the Environment with special responsibility for the heritage, formally signed the preservation order outside the only surviving example of a K3 model, which was built in 1929, and stands, until it is moved to a new technology showcase next year, beneath the portals of the Parrot House at the London zoological gardens.

Layang-Layang, a two-and-a-half year old Asian elephant, helped Lord Elton to make a "trunk call", only to find that the telephone was out of order, to the embarrassment of British Telecom.

The listing covers also a row of five K2 kiosks in Broad Street, Covent Garden, central London: a K1 model in High Street, Bemburgh, Isle of Wight, an example of the earliest standard kiosks which were built between 1921 and 1927; a K4 model, built in 1930, at Bridge Foot, Warrington, Cheshire; and a K2 model, built in 1927, which stands north of Bow Street

Magistrates' Court, west London.

Lord Elton said that he hoped at least 100 telephone kiosks, built before 1939, would be listed throughout the country "because they are so much a part of our history".

There are about 60,000 red telephone kiosks left in Britain but most are K6 models, built after 1939 and not eligible for listing.

British Telecom began phasing out the kiosks 18 months ago as part of a five-year, £160 million modernization plan, replacing them with modern glass booths.

Buyers from the Middle East, Japan and the United States are clamouring for the traditional kiosks, paying up to £800 each, to transform them into a poolside bar, changing room, aviary or greenhouse.

Mr Malcolm Gilbert Scott, great-nephew of Sir Giles, is shipping them to America.

An advertisement in the *Middle Eastern Times* recently described the kiosk as a "unique conversation piece", and the demand is so great that British Telecom in the North-east has sold all 3,200 of their old red boxes this year.

Ex-cadet 'confessed' to WRAC

A woman army officer told a court martial yesterday that a former Sandhurst officer cadet on a drugs charge had telephoned her and confessed to being "a naughty boy". He had previously told her that he used drugs before joining the Army but had given them up.

Private Cymon Timothy Taylor, aged 23, now with the General Service Corps, Royal Armoured Corps Centre Regiment, denies three charges of possessing heroin and a further charge of possessing cannabis or cannabis resin.

Lieutenant Alison Hart, of the WRAC, told the court martial at Bovington, Dorset, that she had had a close but "casual" relationship with Private Taylor at Sandhurst.

She said that he told her he had a drugs problem before joining the Army but was cured. He showed her some blemishes on his arm and said they were old scars from injecting a substance. After Christmas he telephoned and asked to meet her, saying that he had been "a naughty boy" over Christmas. The hearing continues today.

Flood cuts off holiday towns

Towns in south-west Ireland were cut off yesterday after a record overnight rainfall.

An unprecedented 3.5 in of rainfall was recorded on Valentia Island, Co Kerry. In holiday centres near by firemen had to rescue people from homes and cars. At one stage a canoeist had to be called in to help a motorist the fire brigade could not reach.

The worst floods were in Tralee, Co Kerry, and Bantry and Macroom, Co Cork, where streets were submerged by up to 7 ft of water.

Hundreds of people were stranded and tourists had to be given temporary accommodation.

Forecast, page 16

PC charge

A boy aged 16 was remanded in youth custody till Tuesday when he appeared before Balham Juvenile Court in south London yesterday, charged with causing grievous bodily harm to off-duty Police Constable Christopher Green.

Battle over property advertising intensifies

Newspaper owners have gone into the estate agency business as an amazing tit-for-tat war intensifies. The battle began when a wealthy businessman, Peter Robinson, launched his own property guide where estate agents could advertise cheaply.

The first victim of the war was Sheffield's 130-year-old *Morning Telegraph*, which was forced to close in February with the loss of 240 jobs.

The newspaper could not survive without the estate agents' advertising revenue.

But owners of the *Telegraph*, Sheffield Newspapers, hit back by offering cut price house advertising in their evening newspaper, *The Star*. Mr Robinson retaliated by bringing out a motor guide offering cheap advertisements to garages and car dealers.

But the newspaper owners launched their own estate agency business, offering read-

ers a complete service for £100 plus VAT. The newspaper offers to have homes expertly valued and then advertise them four times with photographs.

Now Mr Robinson has fired his latest volley — the threat to launch his own newspaper unless *The Star* quits the estate agency business.

He said: "I don't want a war but I stand by my threat. If *The Star* continues in the estate agency business I will launch a new weekly newspaper which will include the property and motor guides and will sell for around 15p to 16p."

"I can't understand why *The Star* is out to break estate agents. They should have kept the door open. Since I launched my property guide they have reduced their rates. If they had done that in the first place *The Telegraph* might have been saved."



Protesters from Fulbeck and surrounding hamlets demonstrating against proposals to establish a nuclear waste dump on Lincolnshire farmland.

Human chain preventing nuclear dump survey

By Michael Horsnell

Villagers in Lincolnshire have formed a human chain to block plans to turn farmland into a nuclear waste dump.

People in Fulbeck and surrounding hamlets south of Lincoln have so far stopped engineers from Nirex, the government nuclear waste agency, from entering the proposed site to carry out

suitability tests. Police have been called in but there have been no arrests.

The former Second World War bomber airfield at Fulbeck, now used for farming and as a Ministry of Defence training site, is one of four sites under investigation by Nirex for the dumping of low-level nuclear waste.

Miss Marie Webster, aged 42, who helps to organize the

daily protest at the entrance to the 600-acre site, said yesterday: "The proposal is like putting a bomb in your garden. It has disrupted the lives of everyone in the community."

Several hundred people, from septuagenarians to children, hold hands 24 hours a day outside the entrance, which has also been blocked by farm vehicles. It is believed a High Court injunction will be

sought to allow the agency access to the land.

The villagers are trying to raise £12,000 to carry out independent geological tests to prove the unsuitability of the clay soil as a nuclear dump.

Mr Trevor Cartwright, aged 38, spokesman for Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire against Nuclear Dumping (Land), said: "We are worried

this is the thin end of the wedge if we allow it to get that far. Once Nirex has the facility for storing low-level waste the site could become a dustbin for higher levels of radioactive material."

Nirex has not indicated where the waste would come from but it is believed the site would take three trainloads a week for 50 years for shallow burial in steel and concrete.

Kent faces rival peace group at march end

Monsignor Bruce Kent, the anti-nuclear campaigner, was confronted by a rival demonstration yesterday as he approached the end of a 500-mile sponsored protest march.

Mr Kent faced jeers and boos from 30 members of the Coalition for Peace Through Security as he approached the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston, Berkshire. The former CND general secretary had set out from the Polaris submarine base at Faslane, Scotland — using a route taken by warhead convoys. The end of the march was timed to coincide with the forty-first anniversary of the atom bomb dropping on Hiroshima.

Mr Kent said he would demand a public inquiry into cases of leukaemia in local children.

Outside the capital, demonstrations to mark Hiroshima Day focused on a "convoy of cruise missiles and support vehicles travelling from Salisbury Plain to the Greenham Common air base."

CruiseWatch, the network of anti-nuclear campaigners who track missile convoys, said six women staged a "die-in" on the A339 at the Parkhouse roundabout in Hampshire.

Police said one man had been arrested at Bullington Cross, Hampshire, for using obscene language during the protests.

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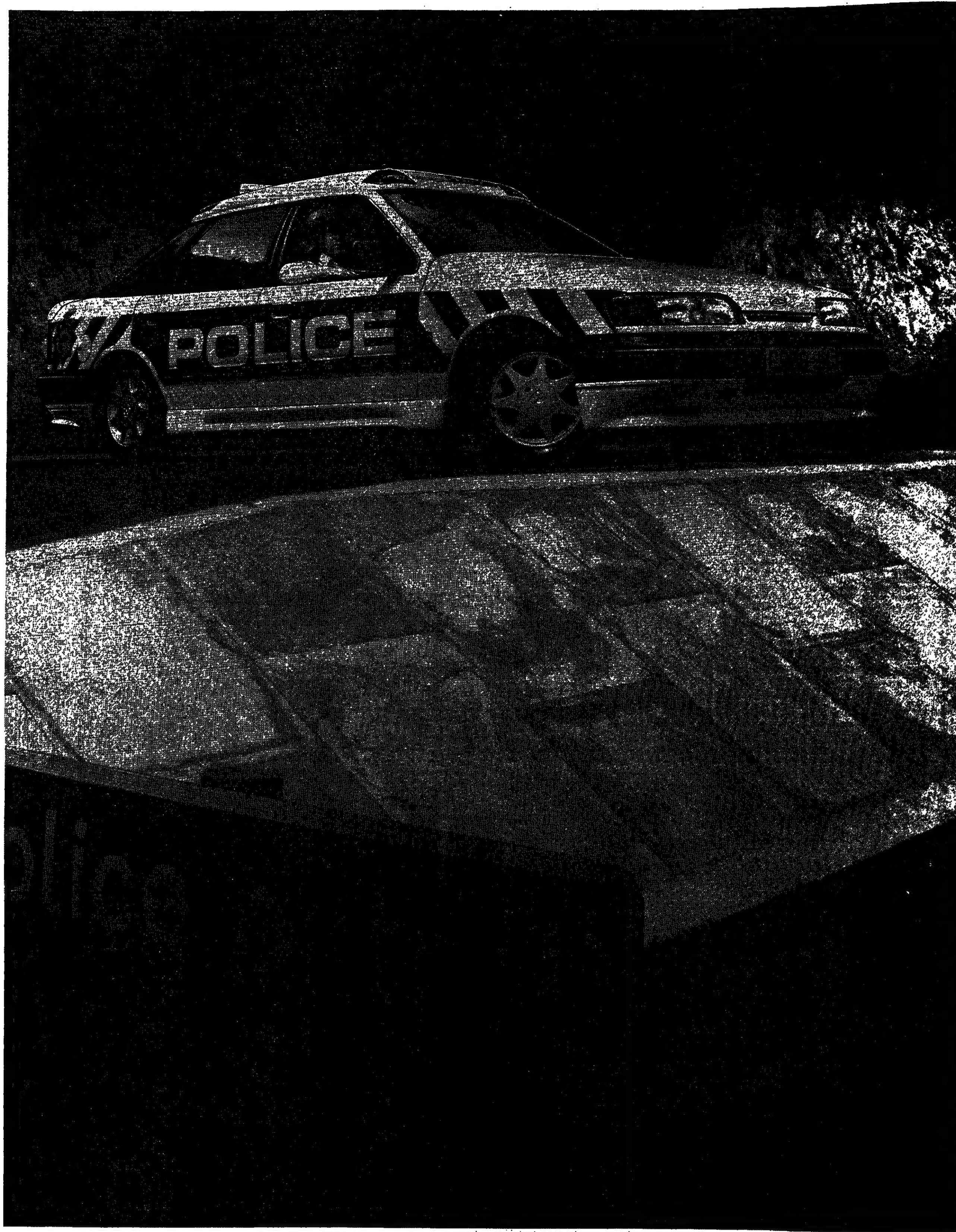
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Ask your Ford dealer for a test drive. We're sure he'll arrange a fair trial.



Granada 4x4

Human rights record of summit countries

Amnesty report finds fault with UK and its critics

By Our Foreign Staff

The British refusal to agree to wide-ranging sanctions against South Africa has been criticized as a moral failure and as sully Britain's record on human rights. However, countries which are now criticizing Britain themselves have records on human rights which have been criticized.

One example of the criticism levelled at Britain came from Mr Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, who said that Britain had sacrificed the leadership of the Commonwealth by compromising its position on moral principle over economic needs.

But on the economic front, Britain is a considerable contributor of aid to many of the countries that are condemning its stand on sanctions. Last year, Britain gave £443 million, including technical co-operation, to Commonwealth countries.

Every year, Amnesty International publishes a report which looks at the human rights record of individual countries. It concentrates on problems involving the imprisonment of non-violent political prisoners, torture and the death penalty.

In its latest report, covering 1984, Amnesty made comments on five of the seven nations which attended the Commonwealth mini-summit in London this week.

● Canada: Commented on

events after a prison riot in 1982, where it said there were reasonable grounds for believing that prisoners had been tortured or ill-treated by guards. The Canadian Government had co-operated in Amnesty International's inquiry, and had said it would implement changes in procedures.

● India: Amnesty said that it was concerned about the detention of prisoners of conscience, and about the number of political detainees who

Zimbabwe gets £11m grants from Britain

Harare (Reuters) — Britain yesterday gave Zimbabwe two grants totalling £10.92 million to finance rural development and agriculture.

This brings its aid commitment to the southern African "frontline" state to more than £160 million in the past six years, making Britain the second-biggest aid donor to Zimbabwe after the United States.

At ceremonies marking the signing of the aid accord, the British High Commissioner, Mr Ramsay Melhuish, referred to sharp differences between Zimbabwe and Britain over economic sanctions against South Africa.

● Disagreeing with a friend

were held without trial, or were awaiting trial under special legislation permitting trial in camera. Amnesty was also concerned about allegations of torture and a number of judicial executions. (In 1985 India received £106m in official financial aid from Britain, including technical co-operation.)

● United Kingdom: Amnesty expressed concern about allegations of torture and ill-treatment during interrogation of political sus-

pects in Northern Ireland. It was also concerned about judicial procedures in political cases in Northern Ireland, and was continuing to investigate a number of shootings by the security forces. In addition, Amnesty was concerned about the arrest of miners during their strike for exercising their freedom of expression, and by allegations of ill-treatment of arrested miners.

● Zambia: Concern was expressed about the detention without trial of alleged opponents of the Government, including one prisoner of conscience and several possible prisoners of conscience. It was also concerned about what appeared to be extra-judicial executions by soldiers of alleged smugglers and about the continued use of the death penalty. (In 1985, Zambia received £26 million of official aid from Britain, including technical co-operation.)

● Zimbabwe: Amnesty was concerned about the detention without trial of suspected opponents of the Government, including prisoners of conscience, and about renewed allegations of the torture of prisoners and extra-judicial executions of civilians by government security forces engaged in counter-insurgency operations. (In 1985, Zimbabwe received £24 million of official aid from Britain, including technical co-operation.)

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Neighbours face Pretoria's fury

Counting cost of retaliation

From Michael Hornsby, Johannesburg

Zimbabwe and Zambia, because of the high profile their leaders have assumed in the pro-sanctions campaign against South Africa, are bearing the brunt of South African retaliation.

Although neither country is as dependent economically on South Africa as such small states as Lesotho and Swaziland, they are none the less extremely vulnerable to South African pressure.

Zimbabwe: South Africa is landlocked Zimbabwe's biggest trading partner, and the conduit for an estimated 90 per cent of its overseas trade, despite the publicly hostile attitude towards Pretoria shown by Mr Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's Prime Minister.

On July 31 this year, the two countries signed a revision of a long-standing trade agreement, extending the preferences, in the form of reduced customs duties, granted on the bulk of Zimbabwean manufactured exports to South Africa.

In 1984, South Africa took 18.3 per cent of Zimbabwe's exports and supplied 19.3 per cent of its imports. Last year, exports to South Africa fell behind those to Britain, mainly because of the decline in the value of the rand, but South Africa remained the biggest source of imports.

It is estimated that Beit, on the Mozambique coast, which is Zimbabwe's nearest port, can only handle 800,000 tons of the country's annual export-import volume of 8 million tons. The rail line to the port is kept open by means of costly protection by troops from Zimbabwe against anti-government insurgents.

The balance of trade is moved through the South African railway and harbour system. A small proportion passes into and out of the South African network through the Mozambique port of Maputo.

Relatively few Zimbabweans work in South Africa — only 7,742, according to 1983 figures — and the Beit oil pipeline makes Zimbabwe independent of South Africa for fuel imports, though the pipe often has to be repaired

because of sabotage attacks by insurgents. The two countries still exchange scheduled air services. Zimbabwe has its own satellite facilities, and is now independent of South Africa for telecommunications. The tourist trade remains brisk.

Veterinary co-operation: South Africa supplied 1,647,239 doses of animal vaccines to Zimbabwe in 1983-1984. Health: South African hospitals treated 182 Zimbabwean patients in 1983-1984, and 3,200 doses of human vaccines were supplied.

Education: between 1979 and 1985, Zambia sent 890 students to South African higher educational institutions.

Only about 1,000 Zambians are legally employed in South Africa. South African passport-holders can enter Zimbabwe, but there is little tourist traffic between the two countries.

Veterinary co-operation: in 1984 South Africa supplied 379,400 doses of vaccine.

Education: between 1979 and 1985, Zambia sent 890 students to South African higher educational institutions.

and 1985, 11,817 Zimbabwean students enrolled at South African institutes of higher education.

Zambia: Another landlocked country, Zambia last year sent only 0.3 per cent of its exports to South Africa, but South Africa supplied 14.5 per cent of its imports, mainly manufactured goods and canned and other foods.

Heavily dependent on mineral exports, especially copper, Zambia's main problem is that the shortest routes for getting these to the sea — through Tanzania and Mozambique — are so inadequate that it has had to turn extensively to South Africa's railways and ports.

It is estimated that at least a quarter of Zambia's exports, and 35 per cent of its imports, pass through South Africa. Zambia is independent of South Africa for electricity, and most of its petroleum products come in from the Tazara railway line from Dar es Salaam.

Zambia has 18 diesel locomotives on hire from South Africa. South African Airways services Zambian Airways' planes and trains its pilots on an ad hoc basis.

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Results in London please US

From Michael Binyon, Washington

President Reagan was yesterday briefed by Mr Chester Crocker, the assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, following his consultations in Europe, and the White House said it regretted Pretoria's economic retaliation against neighbouring black African states.

Mr Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, said Washington deplored punitive sanctions by any party as they were "generally counter-productive". He said Pretoria's retaliation against its neighbours would not lead to the dialogue Mr Reagan had hoped for, but to the dislocations he had feared.

The Administration has refused to comment on the public position taken by Mrs Thatcher on sanctions, or on the reactions of other Commonwealth leaders. The State Department, in keeping with Washington's low-key approach to the whole South African crisis, has also said nothing on specific sanctions.

There is evidence, however, that Washington may be quietly pleased with the outcome of the Commonwealth conference. Britain's reluctance to impose full-scale sanctions does not leave Washington isolated in its opposition to punitive measures.

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Herr Braun at the press conference in West Berlin on Friday at which he described his spectacular 'escape' from East Berlin. Below, the three dummies dressed as Soviet officers.

'Dummy run' escape a hoax

From Our Correspondent Bonn

A man who claimed to have escaped from East Berlin by car by disguising himself and three shop dummies as Russian soldiers admitted yesterday that the story was a hoax.

Herr Heinz Braun, aged 48, had told West Berlin state security police that he wanted to draw attention to the building of the Berlin Wall 25 years ago, a spokesman said.

Police had searched for Herr Braun and unconfirmed reports that he was an East German spy. His West Berlin flat, as well as that of Herr Wolf Quasner, the commercial escape organizer who was said to have masterminded the spectacular flight, was searched on Tuesday night.

Herr Walter Neuhans, the West Berlin Justice Department spokesman, said Herr Braun would now be investigated for joint forgery of car registration documents and the unauthorized wearing of a uniform.

Herr Braun was photographed last week at the wheel of a Lada estate car which had been sprayed a military green and bore Soviet military number plates. With him were the three dummies, dressed as a lieutenant-colonel and two lieutenants.

He told journalists in West Berlin on Friday that two days earlier he had driven through four checkpoints at East Berlin's Invalidenstrasse crossing to West Berlin without challenge by border guards.

Herr Neuhans said Herr



Braun's offence in wearing a uniform was made more serious by the fact that it was a Soviet one. This could involve the allied powers in Berlin when it came to charges, in which case he could face a jail sentence of up to five years.

Herr Neuhans said Herr Quasner had not yet been questioned. Doubts about the great escape story strengthened on Tuesday night when the West German television magazine programme *Kontext*, which covers East-West German topics, said Herr Braun had admitted the hoax.

A commentator said Herr Braun had told allied officials last weekend that the story was a money-making stunt staged to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the Berlin Wall next Wednesday, to make the most of it in payments from gullible news agents.

The *Daily Mail*, which splashed the story on its front page last Friday, and ITN are said to have paid a total of £3,000 for exclusive rights to Herr Braun's tale.

Herr Rainer Hildebrandt, chairman of the August 13 Working Group, which runs the escape museum at Checkpoint Charlie, said he was not surprised at the news that the escape was bogus.

"I had a tip-off last Sunday that Braun was working for the East German Ministry for State Security, I passed this on to our security police."

● LONDON: A spokesman for the *Daily Mail* said yesterday that the matter was being investigated by senior editorial executives, and until they have reported their findings there would be no comment on speculation that £3,000 had been paid for the story.

ITN said it covered the story, but made no payment for it.

Near disaster for Columbia space shuttle

From Mohsin Ali, Washington

The US space shuttle Columbia came within 31 seconds of being launched on January 6 without enough fuel to reach proper orbit, just 22 days before the shuttle Challenger exploded, killing its crew of seven.

Fatigue among overworked launch control personnel at the Kennedy Space Centre has been blamed for the "potentially catastrophic" inadvertent draining of 10,000 lb of liquid oxygen from Columbia's external tank.

"Fortunately, the liquid oxygen flow dropped the main engine inlet temperature below the acceptable limit, causing a launch hold, but only 31 seconds before lift off," the presidential commission investigating the Challenger disaster said in its final report.

Columbia was launched on January 12 after seven delays because of technical problems or bad weather.

The report said the operators, who misinterpreted what the computer system was telling them, "had been on duty at the console for 11 hours during the third day of working 12-hour night shifts".

Black is Republicans' state governor choice

From Michael Binyon, Washington

Mr William Lucas has become the first Black to be nominated by the Republicans as candidate for state governor, after resoundingly winning the Michigan Republican primary on Tuesday.

There were also early indications that Vice-President George Bush held a strong lead over his two rivals, Representative Jack Kemp and the Rev Pat Robertson, in the first elections to have some bearing on the 1988 presidential race.

Mr Lucas, aged 59, a soft-spoken son of West Indian immigrants who holds the powerful post of chief administrator of the Detroit Metropolitan Area, is a former Democrat who was enthusiastically welcomed into the Republican party by President Reagan last year.

He faced a strong challenge from Mr Dick Chrysler, a millionaire who held a strong lead until the closing days of the campaign. But the results indicate Mr Lucas has won by a margin of up to 19 per cent. Towards the end of the campaign Mr Chrysler was accused of violating state labour laws in running his firm.

The Republicans face a strong and popular incumbent Democrat, Governor James Blanchard, who is credited with Michigan's economic revival. But Mr Lucas has

Exchanges get cultural boost

The United States and the Soviet Union have concluded a wide-ranging cultural exchange programme, which will bring artistic and educational contacts back to the level they enjoyed 10 years ago (Michael Binyon writes from Washington).

After months of negotiations officials from the two countries have announced agreement on 13 exchange programmes. These range from important art exhibitions to the sending of a Soviet specialist to teach Americans how to teach Russian.

Cement crisis at Chernobyl

Moscow (Reuters) — The entombment of the Chernobyl nuclear power station's damaged fourth reactor is proceeding too slowly because of a concrete shortage, *Pravda* said yesterday.

The newspaper said the plant's first and second reactors could not resume operations until concrete walls had completely encased the fourth unit.

The paper blamed the Chernobyl concrete factories for failing to work at full capacity.

Subpoenas on bomb technology dropped

Washington — The Justice Department has announced that it has dropped subpoenas against several Israelis wanted for questioning over a plan to smuggle US cluster-bomb technology to Israel (Michael Binyon writes).

In return, the Department said, Israel has promised to co-operate in the investigation.

The subpoenas drew angry protests from the Israeli Government, which has been embarrassed by a series of accusations of attempts to spy on the US, smuggle weapons technology and sell US arms to Iran.

Poll rigging admitted

Lagos (Reuters) — A former Nigerian legislator has confessed that he took an active part in rigging the 1979 elections that returned the country to civilian rule.

Isa Waziri, who sat in the Niger state house of assembly for the ruling National Party of Nigeria, said he entered fictitious names in electoral rolls and then cast the votes himself.

Whaling talks suspended

Washington — An Icelandic minister left talks with US officials here on a whaling dispute to go home, but both American and Icelandic officials denied that the discussions had broken off (Mohsin Ali writes).

Mr Halldor Asgrimsson, Icelandic Fisheries Minister, was due to hold consultations with his Cabinet colleagues in Reykjavik yesterday.

Manila aid

An all-party group of MPs is urging the British Government to increase aid to the Philippines to help the new regime cope with the legacy left by former President Marcos.

Rail disaster

Delhi (AFP) — At least 43 people were killed and 35 injured when an express collided with a goods train in the Indian state of Bihar.

250 flee

Munich (Reuters) — A total of 147 Czech and 109 Polish holidaymakers in West Germany in the first seven months of this year have stayed on.

Rebels move

Port Moresby (Reuters) — Five rebel leaders from Indonesia's Irian Jaya province jailed after fleeing to Papua New Guinea will leave for Ghana later this month to await resettlement in Europe.

Aids alert

Addis Ababa (Reuters) — Ethiopia is to introduce strict surveillance to identify victims of Aids trying to enter the country.

Fall-out

Ankara (Reuters) — A plan for Canada to build Turkey's first nuclear power plant has been dropped because of disagreement between the two countries over financing.

Swiss envoy — The Swiss Government has named its first woman ambassador to another country, Mrs Mariann von Gruenigen, who will become envoy to Finland.

Drug racket

Moscow (Reuters) — A number of Soviet doctors and nurses have been found guilty of illegally selling narcotics obtained from medical institutions, the official newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* reported.

Writers bailed

Khartoum (Reuters) — Sudanese authorities have released on bail 10 journalists arrested after a demonstration against the suspension of two state-owned newspapers.

Forest blaze

Huesca, Spain (Reuters) — Firefighting planes, troops and firemen are battling a fire in the Spanish Pyrenees which has destroyed more than 7,000 acres of pine forest in the last week.

Racing charge

Hong Kong (AFP) — Nine people have been charged here for suspected involvement in Hong Kong's largest horse racing scandal.

Market opens

Peking (Reuters) — China's first stock market since 1949 has opened in Shenyang, China's second-largest industrial city after Shanghai — one of five chosen to experiment with new economic models.

Air born

Vienna (Reuters) — A Jordanian woman gave birth to a baby girl on an Alia Royal Jordanian Airline flight from Chicago to Vienna 33,000ft over southern England, helped by three doctors on board.

Chirac uses guillotine on broadcasting Bill

From Susan MacDonald, Paris

For the fifth time since coming to power five months ago, M. Jacques Chirac's right-wing Government has used the guillotine method to cut short debate and push a Bill through Parliament.

The Socialists have expressed their opposition by tabling a censure motion which, however, has no chance of being adopted as the extreme-right National Front has already stated it would not vote for such a motion.

This time it is the Government's broadcasting Bill which has been guillotined, because, as M Chirac said in the National Assembly on Tuesday night, his Govern-

ment had promised that this Bill would be passed before the end of the present parliamentary session.

The Bill calls for sweeping changes to broadcasting, including the privatization of France's main television channel, TF1.

Meanwhile, Cabinet has approved the text of a decree giving greater flexibility to employers wishing to hire temporary labour.

Under the decree, temporary work contracts would be extended from one to two years, and workers could be hired for any reason other than to replace a permanent worker.



John Huston, the Oscar-winning American film director, getting an affectionate hug from his film actress daughter, Anjelica, on his 80th birthday, which was celebrated at his favourite restaurant in a Los Angeles suburb.

Hisoshima remembers devastation

Hiroshima (Reuters) — The names of almost 5,000 victims of the Hiroshima nuclear blast, who died over the past year, were added to a memorial roll yesterday as the city silently marked its devastation 41 years ago.

Cars and trams stopped in the streets, people clasped hands in prayer, offered flowers, or simply stood and remembered the 140,000 victims of the world's first atomic bomb.

The mayor, Mr Takeshi Arai, read Hiroshima's annual peace message, calling on the world to abolish nuclear weapons and inviting the superpowers to hold a disarmament summit in the city.

Wheat sale backlash divides allies

From Stephen Taylor, Sydney

The Reagan Administration's decision to sell subsidized wheat to the Soviet Union, at serious cost to Australian producers, has unleashed a backlash here which, if public statements are to be believed, could signify long-term damage to the relationship with the United States.</

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3 MONTHS TIME, INTEREST FREE.

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from £9 a month

Automatic	Spin Speed	Price
INDEBIT 820	800	199.95
PHILIPS AW8065	800	219.95
BALAY Solartonic TS515	800	229.95
ENGLISH ELECTRIC 1535W	800	234.95
HOVER 3384 Electron	800	249.95
INDEBIT 'Omega' 10308	1000	254.95
ZANUSSI Z9181	800	259.95
CREDA Concorde 17003	1100	269.95
INDEBIT 'Omega' 12308	1200	274.95
HOVER 3386 Electron	1100	279.95
ENGLISH ELECTRIC 1545W	1000	289.95
ZANUSSI 15873 Microtronic	1000	299.95
HOTPOINT 9540P	1000	329.95
HOVER A3418 Computer	1100	349.95

With Built-in Tumble Dryer Spin Speed

NEWPOL	Extra Dry 800	299.95
CANDY	Turbo 21	309.95

With Built-in Tumble Dryer Spin Speed

SERVIS	'Laser' 115	235.95
ENGLISH ELECTRIC 1475W		199.95
HOVERMATIC 5052		204.95

TUMBLE & SPIN DRYERS

from £5 a month

Tumble Dryers	Load	Price
CREDA 37304 reverse action	6.5lb	94.95
CREDA 431 reverse action	9lb	129.95
ENGLISH ELECTRIC 1375W	9lb	129.95
HOVER D6218	9lb	144.95

Spin Dryers

FRIGIDAIRE	FD1400	1400	54.90
FRIGIDAIRE	FD2800	2800	67.95

Includes 2 year guarantee (parts & labour)

DISHWASHERS

from £9 a month

INDEBIT	D910	12	199.95
BENDIX	7004 Auto Twelve	12	239.95
CREDA	17902 Concorde	12	249.95
HOVER	D7114	12	259.95

Small Appliances

Kettles, irons, toasters, shavers, haircare, food mixers, multi-cookers, grills, sandwich toasters, heated trays, deep fat fryers, blenders, processors, coffee makers, drinkmakers, teamakers, carving knives, can openers, telephones, strimmers & hedge trimmers.

VACUUM CLEANERS

VACUUM CLEANERS

from £5 a month

Upright	107A "Ho-beat"	35
GOBLIN	SHampoo Polisher	Wet
HOOPER	502 Super	
ELECTROLUX	U1232 Turbo Junior	50
HOOPER	U2332 Turbo	41
HOOPER	551 WITH TOOLS	55
ELECTROLUX	U2336 Turbo AutoFlex	41
HOOPER	610 WITH TOOLS	55
ELECTROLUX	612 WITH TOOLS	56
Cylinder		Wet
HOOPER	S1122 Dustette	
	portable	17
GOBLIN	Rio	75
PHILIPS	P62	80
HOOPER	S456 Powerglide	80
GOBLIN	P303	80
ELECTROLUX	165	75
ELECTROLUX	185E Electronic	
	chw tools"	80
ELECTROLUX	Z326 chw tools	90
PHILIPS	P68 with power	
	head	100
ELECTROLUX	"Super" Z327	100
HOOPER	S4340 SeroSonic	100
	2141	100
ELECTROLUX	380 "Turbotmatic"	110
HOOPER	S4340 SeroSonic	110
	55	100
*This price includes PAX allowance.		
Wet and Dry	cleaners	
PHILIPS	HL3765 "Pro 20"	80

Cylinder

FREE	TOWER EL
	DEEP FAT F
	WITH ALL

ch tools

2326 ch tools	800	67.95
658 with power	800	92.95
head	1000	89.90
'Supra' Z327	1000	92.95
53430 Sensatronic	1000	96.95
380 'Turbotonic'	1100	112.95
55	1000	144.95

*This price includes P.T.V. allowance.

Wet and Dry Cleaners

PHILIPS HL3765 'PRO 20'	800	59.95
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MICROWAVES

FREE TOWER DEEP FAT FRYER WITH ALL MICROWAVES

MICROWAVE OVENS

from £5 a month

All with turntable except where starred.

GOODMANS 040*	Capacity (cu.ft.)	Price
040*	(0.6)	129.95
SOLAROX T2	(0.64)	129.95
SANYO BM1207*	(0.5)	129.95
SHARP 5570W	(0.6)	149.95
COMARACT 20701	(0.64)	149.95
4012	(0.6)	159.95
49001	(0.6)	169.95

Micro-compact

SHARP R1765/58708	(0.6)	169.95
1511	(0.5)	179.95
7910AKB108*	(1.0)	194.95
SOLAROX M413*	(1.2)	199.95
40135	(1.0)	219.95
2511N	(0.8)	229.95
SHARP R1762/72708	(0.8)	249.95
SANYO BM2710 'Digitouch'	(0.8)	269.95
BELLING	(0.8)	369.95

*This price includes P.T.V. allowance.

Wet and Dry Cleaners

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Includes 2 year guarantee (parts & labour)

COOKING

ELECTRIC COOKERS

from £6 a month

Free-Standing		
BABY BELLING	120	189
BELLING	4/30N	189
BELLING	Compact 4 4/30T	189
TRICITY	1526 Princess Deluxe (Grey)	194
CREDA	Highline	2
BELLING	900LR Classic	2
TRICITY	2317 Gourmet	2
	Radiant	21*
BELLING	900XR Executive	2
BELLING	Formal 600S	23*
TRICITY	4628 Sovereign Ceramic double oven	23*
BELLING	Formal 600X (ceramic)	2

BUILT-IN OVENS

£129.95 to £399.95 or from £5 a month

BALAY, BELLING, CREDA, INDEBIT, PHILIPS, TRICITY, ZANUSSI

ELECTRIC HOB UNITS

£69.95 to £229.95 or from £5 a month

BALAY, BELLING, CREDA, INDEBIT, PHILIPS, ZANUSSI

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Jerusalem court backs presidential pardon for Shin Bet officials

From Ian Murray, Jerusalem

Presidential pardons granted to four of the most senior Shin Bet counter-intelligence officials have been upheld by the High Court of Justice here in a majority decision.

The ruling means that a police inquiry into how two Palestinians died while in Shin Bet custody, and how two official inquiries into their deaths were deliberately misled, will not be able to bring charges against some of those most closely involved in the affair.

It remains to be seen if Mr. Yosef Harsh, the Attorney-General, can effectively carry out his promise to investigate the politicians involved in the affair, notably Mr. Yitzhak Shamir, who was Prime Minister at the time and was thus the only responsible member of the Government.

In a second, unanimous decision the three members of the Supreme Court agreed that there was no need to issue a further instruction to police to investigate the affair, despite a petition arguing that there was insufficient guarantee that this would happen.

As a result of these decisions Mr. David Kraus, the Police Inspector-General, will start

interrogating witnesses about the affair. According to some legal opinions he will now be able to find out more, since the four pardoned men will be obliged to answer all questions, and will not be able to refuse to give information on the grounds that it would incriminate them.

Mr. Kraus told the Knesset's law committee last week that one question he would be asking Mr. Avraham Shalom, the Shin Bet chief, who is among those pardoned, is to explain what he meant when he said he had "permission and authority" to order the killing of the two men. (He used this phrase in his letter asking for pardon.)

Mr. Shamir, who was the only person authorized to grant Mr. Shalom such "permission", said in a recent interview that there was no standing order to kill captured terrorists. "It wasn't in the form of an instruction," he said. "It was a conversation."

Yesterday's decision means the President has virtually unlimited powers of pardon

even, as in this case, where those concerned have not been found guilty of any offence. In a dissenting opinion included with the 160-page decision, Justice Aharon Barak insisted that the President does not have the power to grant a pardon in circumstances of this kind.

As the inquiry gets underway, lawyers acting for 10 other Shin Bet agents involved in the case, including those who carried out the killing, are preparing to request pardons for their clients.

They will now be able to cite the High Court ruling as a precedent.

The politicians and organizations that brought the case to the High Court generally were not dismayed by yesterday's decision. Their view was that the legal move had forced the Government to agree to the police inquiry, which it had initially tried to prevent.

On the other hand, Mr. Yitzhak Modai, who was the Justice Minister when the pardons were granted, said the decision proved that the Government had been perfectly correct throughout in its handling of the case.

Six die as Sydney hit by deluge



South-western suburbs of Sydney, Australia under water (above, left) after the Georges River burst its banks, causing motorists and bus drivers to abandon their vehicles on the partly submerged Milperra Bridge, while pedestrians like the schoolboy (right) battled their way through the downpour.

After its driest winter in a century, the city was deluged by the most torrential rains ever recorded here, causing flooding which claimed six lives and wreaked immense damage and disruption (Stephen Taylor writes).

The freak conditions — a full 15 inches of rain fell in 24 hours to mid-morning

yesterday — forced the evacuation of 500 people from the west of the city.

In one tragedy a couple trying to wade to safety from a car trapped in the flood waters had their children, aged one and three, dragged from their arms and drowned.

In two days Sydney had more rain than in the previous six months, but forecasters say the storms have now passed.

The three municipalities worst affected by flooding were Blacktown, Auburn and Fairfield. Elsewhere in New South Wales the towns of Bathurst and Windsor also suffered extensive damage.

Mr. Barrie Unsworth, the new state

premier, said it was impossible at present to estimate the damage.

● PEKING: Floods have killed 30 people in China's north-east Liaoning province (Reuters reports).

The *China Daily* said yesterday that more than 1,500 villages and tens of thousands of homes were under water after weeks of torrential rain.

● DHAKA: At least 12 people were killed and 45 others were missing after the swirling waters of the Ganges devastated homes, washed away bridges and flooded rice fields in Bangladesh's northern Chapai-Nawabganj district during the past two days (Ahmed Fazi writes).

Chinese respond to Gorbachov initiative

From Robert Grieser, Peking

China's Foreign Ministry yesterday responded more favourably and in more detail to the speech by Mr. Gorbachov, the Soviet leader, at Vladivostok last week than it has in previous statements.

In his speech on July 28, now known as his "Asian initiative", Mr. Gorbachov offered, among a variety of proposals, to withdraw some Soviet troops from Afghanistan and Mongolia, and to train Chinese cosmonauts.

"We have taken note of the speech," a ministry spokesman, Mr. Yu Zhizhong, said. "We believe that he has made some new remarks on the improvement of Sino-Soviet relations that have not been made before."

Speaking to Soviet and Western journalists, Mr. Yu said: "China and the Soviet Union have already begun to hold dialogues at a certain level. The question is how to hold serious dialogues and make substantial progress."

He confirmed that experts from the two countries had exchanged views on the co-operative use of the water resources of the Heilong Jiang/Amur river in Manchuria, and that agreements were being drawn up.

Co-operation in space was a proposal yet to be studied.

When Soviet correspondents asked for China's position on Mr. Gorbachov's proposed collective security conference in Asia, Mr. Yu replied: "We hope that, to ensure the security of the Asian-Pacific region, practical steps will be taken to reduce the nuclear missiles already deployed, and to reduce the hotspots in Kampuchea and Afghanistan."

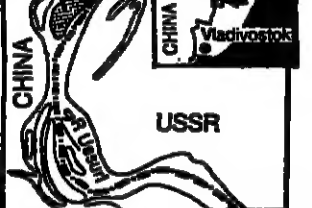
Moscow has about 170 mobile medium-range SS20 missiles deployed in Soviet Asia, and 450,000 well-equipped troops along the 7,200-mile border with China. Opposing them are 1.5 million less well-equipped troops of the People's Liberation Army. Soviet troop strength in Mongolia is estimated at between 25,000 and 75,000.

● MOSCOW: The Soviet Union is ready to consider China's position on a dispute over the demarcation of their border along the Amur and Ussuri rivers, a deputy foreign minister said yesterday (Reuters reports).

Mr. Mikhail Kapitsa said Moscow was prepared to recognize that the border passed along the main channel of the rivers rather than on the Chinese side.

Mr. Kapitsa, an Asian specialist, was expanding on the Vladivostok speech, in which Mr. Gorbachov held out the prospect of an agreement on the river frontier.

Referring to treaties signed between China and Tsarist Russia, he said: "What this means is that a number of islands which under the treaties were considered part of Russian territory would be beyond the mainstream and part of China."



Weakened racism law for Israelis

From Ian Murray, Jerusalem

Rabbi Meir Kahane, Israel's extreme nationalist leader, has voted in the Knesset to help pass an anti-racism law originally drafted to combat the Kach Party he founded. In the words of Mr. Abba Eban, one of the Knesset's elder statesmen, the move at midnight on Tuesday was "like Casanova voting for the seventh commandment."

The new law, which carries penalties of up to five years' imprisonment, has been watered down since it was first drafted that the Rabbi is confident it can never successfully be used against him or his supporters.

At the same time, in order to support the law from the right-wing Likud faction, the Labour Party had to agree to support another new law which prohibits any Israeli firm having unauthorized contact with leaders of the PLO.

The watering-down of the bill was done to placate the religious parties, which were worried it could be used to attack Judaism. The law as passed does not cover public places that aim to preserve the character or uniqueness of a religion. Since Rabbi Kahane's platform is that he is fighting to preserve a Jewish state for Jews, this is a perfect escape clause for him.

The law leaves the onus of proof on the prosecution, which must show that statements of publications are actually meant to incite racism before there can be a conviction. It will not be sufficient, as the original draft had intended, to prove that the publication was itself likely to incite racism.

The new law forbidding contact with the PLO is a further blow to the small dovish wing of the Labour Party, which, since the recent meeting between Mr. Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, and King Hassan of Morocco, has been trying to launch an internal debate aimed at recognizing the PLO in peace negotiations.

González rejects talking to Eta

From Richard Wigg, Madrid

Spain's Socialist Government, pleased with receiving the degree of anti-terrorist collaboration from the French Government that it never obtained from the French Socialists, has decided to respond with equal firmness to calls for negotiations with Eta, the Basque terrorist organization.

"There will be no negotiations, no Spanish government will negotiate with a band of terrorists," Señor Felipe González, the Prime Minister, declared after receiving M. Robert Pandraud, France's Minister for Security, who is on a visit here. Their talks lasted 30 minutes.

The visit was yesterday being hailed here as marking a new high point in anti-terrorist co-operation between the two countries and Señor González's remarks were praised unanimously by the right-wing press.

In Madrid's view, M. Chirac's Government is showing determination where previous French governments wavered, even though a framework for depriving Eta of a sanctuary in south-west France from which to prepare attacks on Spanish targets had existed for the past two years.

Meanwhile, Spanish sources yesterday expressed doubt about whether the threatening letters received by the British, West German and Japanese embassies here really were from Eta.

They base their reservations on the expressions used, such as the reference to "Japanese economic penetration in Spain" in the letter to the Japanese Embassy. Eta is always careful not to use the word "Spain", experts said.

No Basque newspapers, which habitually receive calls from Eta after attacks assuming responsibility, had by yesterday been contacted by the underground organization.

Señor González's satisfaction with France was underlined when he also used his meeting with M. Pandraud as the basis for giving Spaniards a solemn guarantee that the

terrorists would in the end be defeated by the security forces.

The Prime Minister had evidently chosen the meeting as the best opportunity for stopping in its tracks talk in the Basque country about Madrid missing good opportunities for settling the problem of Basque terrorism around the negotiating table.

His words had the effect yesterday of leaving the ruling Basque Nationalist Party isolated there.

However, the Basque Nationalists counter-attacked yesterday, accusing the Prime Minister of adopting a "tone worthy of an army sergeant-major". It was the duty of

Holidaymakers need not change plans for travel to Spain, but must be on the watch after death threats from Basque separatists to Britons working there, the Foreign Office said yesterday (our Foreign Staff writes).

politicians to find ways to eradicate violence and solve the country's main problems, the party contended.

The pro-Eta Herri Batasuna party claimed that Señor González knew that there would have to be negotiations to modify Spain's present constitution — a reference to Eta's demand for Basque independence. "Here in the Basque country the present constitutional set-up is not valid," the party spokesman declared.

Señor González's words showed how the impact of Eta's recent spectacular crimes in Madrid rule out any talk of negotiations.

His Government, he promised, would push ahead doggedly with its present policies for combating terrorism, based on police action and international collaboration. It would bring back into normal political life any Eta members who abandoned terrorism and were not guilty of crimes.

The Spanish authorities are keeping quiet, however, about the price they anticipate the Chirac Government will extract for this stepped-up collaboration.

Drug use falls in US forces

Washington (Reuters) —

Drug abuse among US military personnel has dropped sharply since 1980, but alcohol consumption remains a serious problem, the Defence Department said yesterday.

A Department survey showed that 8.9 per cent of the 2.1 million military personnel used marijuana and other drugs last year, down from 27 per cent in 1980.

The survey showed that the Marines had made the most progress in cutting regular use of drugs (37 per cent in 1980 to 9.9 per cent in 1985), but remained the heaviest drinkers, followed by the Army, Navy and Air Force.

The report, based on questionnaires answered by 17,328 enlisted troops and officers, suggested that even though alcohol use was slightly down on 1980 figures it was still pervasive in the forces.

The report said 87 per cent of military personnel drank occasionally, two-thirds were moderately to heavy drinkers, and 12 per cent were heavy drinkers.

While average alcohol consumption had fallen from 1.5 to 1.2 oz a day between 1980 and 1985, the average Marine drank 1.5 oz a day last year compared to 1.9 oz in 1980.

"Alcohol continues to be a very significant problem," said Mr. William Mayer, the assistant Defence Secretary.

"In the long run, alcohol is the bigger problem. But the more deadly one at this time is drugs."

Mr. Mayer, who is in charge of health affairs for the Pentagon, said the success of the anti-drug programme was partly due to warnings about the consequences of drug use sent to regular and random urine tests for drug use. More than 64,000 men and women had been dismissed from the forces in the past three years for drug use.

The report concluded: "Results suggest that alcohol use is by far the most serious substance use problem, although the use of drugs presents important discipline problems for the military."

Barco takes over in Bogotá

From Geoffrey Matthews, Bogotá

Señor Virgilio Barco Vargas, a 65-year-old technocrat, will be sworn in as Colombia's President today, amid a national mood which can only be described as quiet, somewhat puzzled expectancy, mixed with trepidation over escalating violence fuelled by guerrillas and cocaine barons.

As President-elect since his landslide electoral victory ten weeks ago, Señor Barco has been keeping a low profile and saying surprisingly little, except to reiterate his one major campaign promise, that his Government's first priority would be to tackle unemployment, officially standing at 15 per cent but in reality much higher.

One important question mark still hangs over the complexion of his Government and whether it will continue the tradition of including members of the opposition.

That tradition dates from 1958, when civilian rule was restored after a brief military intervention to end a decade-long civil war in which as many as 300,000 may have been killed.

Under a pact called the National Front, designed to cool sectarian hatreds, the Liberal and Conservative parties alternated in the presidency for the next 16 years. Even after normal elections were resumed, in 1974, the

National Front has continued on an unofficial basis.

But Señor Barco argues persuasively that in a genuine democracy the triumphant party has a mandate to govern, while the defeated party has "a sacred duty to mount a constructive opposition."

The Conservatives seem inclined to agree, in the belief that it is smarter politics to stay out and let the Liberals, traditionally Colombia's majority party, take full responsibility for the incoming administration. Two successive Liberal governments between 1974 and 1982 were badly tainted by widespread corruption, and there are mounting fears that the same will happen this time.

Although Señor Barco's own reputation for honesty is unblemished, there is alarm over political deals he was forced to make with certain notorious party hacks in order to ensure that the powerful Liberal party machine would propel him to the presidency.

A cold, humourless man, reported to have an explosive temper in private, Señor Barco's personality contrasts sharply with the man he succeeds today, Señor Belisario Betancur, an independent Conservative, whose human touch was always in evidence.

As he bows out, Señor Betancur is increasingly being regarded as the most bold and imaginative of recent administrations. He attempted to forge peace with the guerrilla organizations, steered Colombia into the non-aligned group and championed the Contadora group's peace initiatives in Central America.

Señor Barco seems set to concentrate much more on domestic affairs, where, say his admirers, his proven ability as an administrator will come to the fore.

An economist and engineer, who has served as ambassador in both London and Washington, and as a director of the World Bank, he has a reputation as a workaholic with an obsession for efficiency. That, say many independent observers, is just the kind of executive leadership the country needs at a time when the economy, among the more healthy in Latin America, is improving.

Today's inauguration is to be attended by the US Secretary of State, Mr. George Shultz, who will no doubt be keen to discuss with him Colombia's continuing campaign against the drug trade.

Last week this claimed another victim when a Supreme Court judge was assassinated by hit-men hired by the drug "mafia" in an attempt to prevent further extraditions of their brethren to the United States.

Doctors held in Bangladesh demonstration

More than 20 junior doctors were arrested, and at least 35 others wounded, as police fired tear gas shells and used truncheons to disperse a demonstration in central Dhaka by about 300 newly-qualified medical graduates demanding government jobs (Ahmed Fazi writes).

The clashes marked the end of a week-long agitation by more than 1,200 unemployed doctors. The health ministry announced last week that it would take on 500 doctors,

The price of Pacific fish and the superpower rivalry involved is a big issue facing leaders of the South Pacific Forum when they begin their annual four days of talks in Suva tomorrow.

The forum comprises the 13 independent states of the South Pacific, ranging in size from Australia to tiny Pacific atoll nations such as Tuvalu, with an area of 10 square miles and a population of 9,000.

The fishing rights problem looms over the meeting, casting the Soviet Union in the role of the good guy offering lucrative fishing deals to impoverished island nations which for years have seen their fish being taken for nothing by United States tuna men.

In spite of nine rounds of talks between the Forum Fishing Agency and American officials there is still no agreement. The buccaner-like members of the American Tuna-men's Association have bided from their original stance that they do not have to pay royalties for migratory tuna, but argue that their catches do not warrant the royalties being offered by the Russians.

Mr. David Lange, the New Zealand Prime Minister, before he left for the meeting, summed up the dilemma facing the small forum members. Although naturally pro-Western in their outlook, they were having to look favourably on

Superpower rivalry in South Pacific

From Richard Long, Suva, Fiji

The Soviet offers as they had little alternative.

This in turn brought an unfavourable reaction from the United States and the prospect of Washington increasing its military presence in the area to counter the Soviet presence.

The prospect was for increased superpower rivalry in the South Pacific.

The countries of the South Pacific Forum are Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

The South Pacific, Mr. Lange said, "is a judge that to be in New Zealand's interest and not in the Pacific's interest."

He acknowledged that Washington, aware of the consequences, had "moved heaven and earth" to find a solution, without success. The tuna men said they could not match the Russian payments, and Washington took the view that it could not subsidize commercial interests.

The irony was that Washington would, in the end, pay a great deal more to be militarily prepared in the region.

Last August the tiny state of Kiribati, formerly the British-administered Gilbert Islands, signed a \$12.2 million fishing deal with Moscow. Vanuatu is

now considering an offer which includes, for the first time, onshore facilities. Fiji has said it would consider an offer.

The most heated debate at the forum, however, is expected to centre on the issue of independence for the French territory of New Caledonia. Melanesian member states are expected to push for a resolution backing an independent Kanak republic. The more conservative Polynesians, with Australia and New Zealand, are expected to oppose this.

Mr. Lange thinks it inevitable that the forum will, as a compromise, refer the issue to the United Nations Committee on Decolonization, seeking New Caledonia's re-inscription on the UN list of countries that are not self-governing.

The leaders will also approve the protocols of the South Pacific nuclear free zone treaty, which aims to ban the manufacture, storage, testing and use of nuclear devices in the vast area of the Pacific between the west coast of South America and the east coast of Australia.

Of the nuclear powers, China and the Soviet Union have indicated that they will sign. The US and Britain have yet to decide. France, which continues to test nuclear weapons in French Polynesia, is expected to ignore the treaty.

Delhi accepts British drug agents

Delhi (AP) — India has approved in principle the posting of British narcotics officers here, a Foreign Ministry spokesman told Parliament.

But Mr. K. R. Narayanan, the Minister of State for External Affairs, did not dispel doubts about political troubles with the drug programme, stalled because of

strained relations between India and Britain.

Indian and British sources had reported that British drug enforcement agents would be posted in India by the end of last May.

India complains that Britain is not taking a hard line against Sikh extremists and extraditing Sikhs who are demanding a separate Sikh

nation in the north Indian state of Punjab. Some British newspapers have suggested that India was trying to put pressure on Britain to crack down on the Sikhs by holding off on the placement of British narcotics officers.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister, told the BBC last week that India was not using the drug issue to bargain for a tough stand on Sikhs.

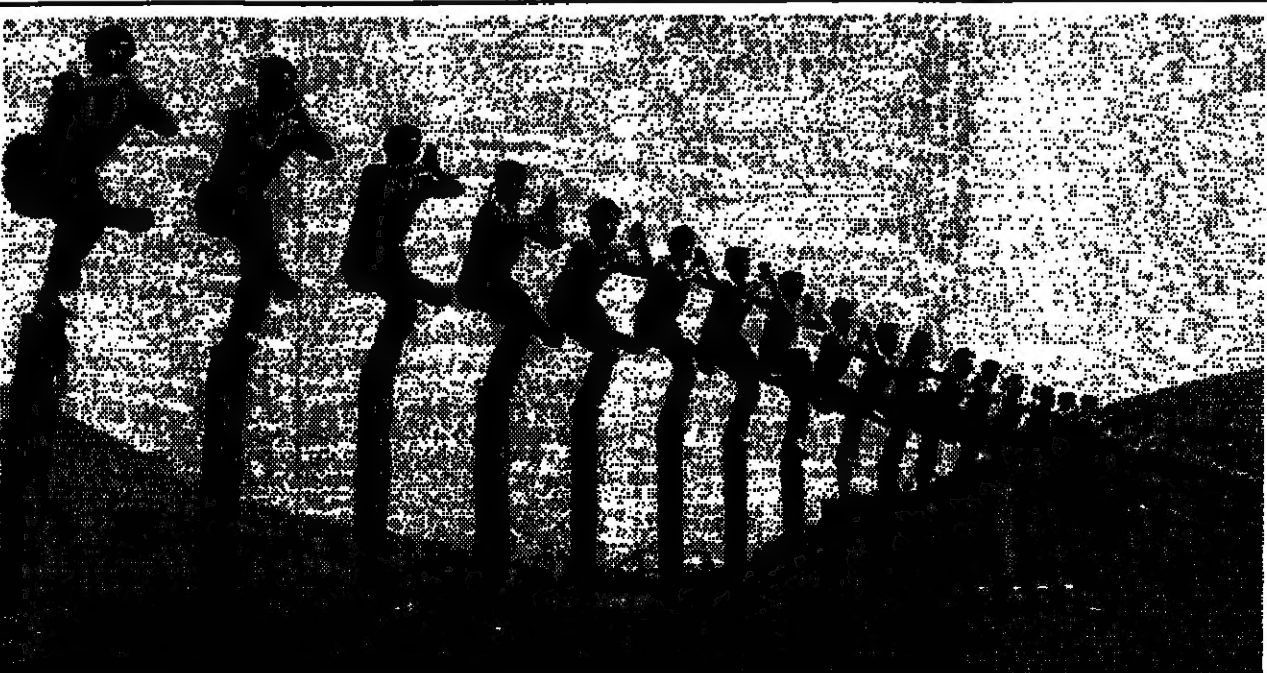
Pakistan court upholds Army regime's laws

From Hasan Akhtar, Islamabad

A full bench of the Sind High Court has upheld the validity of all laws promulgated in Pakistan by martial law authorities during an 8½-year period until December 30 last year.

The bench, headed by Chief Justice Nasiruddin, rejected the petition of a former airport security officer, who had sought the court's intervention against the termination of his employment in August 1981, under martial law regulation 52.

The High Court's decision was considered vital, since it debars people affected by martial law from seeking legal redress.



Troops of the Chinese People's Liberation Army perform a martial-arts exercise as part of their military training, and provide a photographer with a prize-winning picture for a competition to mark China's Army Day, which falls tomorrow.

SPECTRUM

Papering under the Tory cracks

THE TIMES
PROFILE
CONSERVATIVE CENTRAL OFFICE

Conservative Central Office, the London HQ of the Tory party machine, is used to abuse from its friends. It is always an easy scapegoat for frustrated MPs, voluntary workers, even Cabinet ministers. If things go wrong, blame the party bureaucrats, goes the cry. Words like "idle", "out-of-touch" and "spendthrift" permanently battle for space in the political air.

This week, with the stories of the rift between Mrs Thatcher and the man who currently runs Central Office, Mr Norman Tebbit, the abuse has hit an unusually high point, even for the injured inhabitants of Smith Square.

The best way to understand the Tories' elegantly fronted office in Westminster is to liken it to a lock on a canal. Around the middle of the parliamentary term, it begins to fill with people and money as the level of election readiness rises. It peaks at the campaign itself and then the process goes into reverse. The people and the money drain away until it is time for the cycle to start all over again.

With such a degree of ebb and flow it is perhaps not surprising that the party which likes to stand for solid British virtues seems often — and particularly this week — to have so volatile an HQ.

It is the largest and — for all the occasional rows over staff-cutting economies — the best-financed of the four party organizations. But it has an oddly-assorted mixture of people behind its doors. A section of its staff are long-term retainers, untouched by the feverish entrances and exits and resigned to the poor pay and frequent changes of style, management and dogma. They work side by side with a quick-change cast of short-termers of whom the most senior is the chairman himself.

Chairmen bring in their own people; there is a rapid turnover of younger researchers who may stop only long enough to get their footing on the political ladder; election build-ups bring in yet more specialists on temporary secondment. The inside of the building reflects this turnover: it is a warren of small, poky rooms divided by often very temporary partitions.

High policy coexists with humdrum doorstep politics. The chairman at Central Office may be one of a Prime Minister's closest political confidants; his colleagues

may be arbitrating disputes in far-flung constituencies about coffee-morning accounting. On the same day a watchful (but not overbearing) eye has to range over 650 parliamentary constituencies which have to be brought to the election start line with a presentable candidate, and a minister may have to be briefed for *Question Time* in the midst of a crisis like Westland.

For three weeks every five years, party headquarters has the world at its feet: its media hammer on the door while Cabinet ministers listen humbly to explanations of target voters and market segmentation. The moment it has helped put the leader in Downing Street, its power and influence begins to evaporate.

Designing an election-winning strategy is always harder when a party is in government: much policy-making will be done in Whitehall, much presentation is out of Central Office hands. There is the old Catch-22 facing incumbents campaigning for another term: presenting a new plan to the electorate is liable to provoke questions about why the Government hasn't thought about it or done it before.

At the moment, the Conservatives are feeling the force of this over both education and crime rates. Public dissatisfaction has generally helped the Conservatives on these issues in the past but that is now offset by scepticism about the government's ability to make an impact after failing to do so after seven years in office.

Worse than this are the interconnected problems which lie behind the recent rash of stories suggesting that Norman Tebbit's relations with Downing Street had deteriorated to the point where he might be about to resign. At the heart of this is unmistakable evidence that Mrs Thatcher does not share her party chairman's view of the strategy which the party needs now.

These snippets of information about secret meetings at Chequers to consider new research findings have made already uncomfortable Tory MPs in marginal seats even more uneasy. The huge parliamentary majority delivered in 1983 by the collapse of the Labour vote brought in dozens of pleasantly surprised new MPs who — short of a very dramatic turnaround



Mrs Thatcher's image makers past and present (clockwise from bottom left): Norman Tebbit, present party chairman; Cecil Parkinson, party chairman at the 1983 election; Lord McAlpine, party treasurer; Sir Gordon Reece, communications adviser in the 1979 and 1983 campaigns; Michael Dobbs (left), deputy chairman of Saatchi and Saatchi on secondment as Tebbit's chief of staff, with Harvey Thomas (right), yesterday announced as director of promotions and presentation; and Jeffrey Archer, deputy chairman

— will not be in the next parliament. They have little else to do except ponder the nuances of culpability for the Westland and British Leyland debacles.

The conclusions drawn by many of them are similar to those drawn inside the circle of non-Central Office advisers around the Prime Minister.

Tebbit's electoral analysis, and that of his key lieutenants, is firmly rooted in making sure that the party is not distracted by the threat

from the Alliance. Those who disagree with this, including the MPs directly challenged by the Alliance and not by Labour, are worried by the unreflectively traditional extremism-bashing aimed at Labour.

Occasionally this battle pops up in the coded utterances of ministers; Douglas Hurd, in the wake of Westland, said pointedly that a third term would not be won by "scrapping our opponents". "The problem", one dissenter said, "is

that our guns are simply pointing in the wrong direction".

Tebbit is confronted by a genuinely new problem. Every wheel and cog in the Conservative and Labour party machines has been designed and maintained for years on the assumption of a two-party fight. The slick 1983 campaign masterminded by Cecil Parkinson hit a tempting Labour Party target where it hurt most and sidelined the Alliance.

Now the scene has changed. The

Alliance has steadily enlarged its hold on local councils; its opinion poll rating refuses to go below 20 per cent; talk of coalition and hung parliaments is incessant.

Central Office projects a clear outlook on three-party politics which amounts to the view that it is a temporary phenomenon. This philosophy defines Labour as the "main threat" — in the words of one key planner — while acknowledging that many Conservative voters were in fact defecting to the Alliance. But he added that this was a short-term tactical problem.

After the council elections last year, Central Office encouraged its council and parliamentary candidates to apply to London for help in countering the Alliance. The burst of energy quickly fizzled out and has reappeared only recently. Virtually its only tangible effect on the ground has been to divide the regular "know-your-enemy" briefing into separate Labour and Alliance newsletters.

Central Office is poised to unveil several new campaigning weapons which have been in preparation for most of this year. They will look and sound impressive — a massive direct mail campaign, upgraded computers, greater regionalization of campaigning, new membership benefits — but the message which these are designed to convey remains fuzzy.

The Central Office defence against the charges that its stance is out of date and too static relies on the counter-charge that the rest of the party leadership cannot deliver a clear enough line for the headquarters machine to go out and sell. The counter-attack will be carried on to the party conference at which many of the enhanced campaigning techniques will be unveiled in full.

Norman Tebbit suffers two disadvantages. First, with the arrival of Cecil Parkinson to succeed Lord Thorneycroft as chairman, the job suddenly became massively visible. The Falklands war gave him a ready platform. Tebbit is undiplomatic with the media, mistrustful of it, and was not born with looks which come across as friendly and reassuring on television.

Second, his intellectual appetites are for policy and not presentation. He regards himself as one of the last guardians of Thatcherite radicalism in a Cabinet which is tending to forget how it all began. Some of the criticisms of the complacency of the current Saatchi & Saatchi plans for the run-up to the election simply reflect the fact that Tebbit finds selling a good deal less congenial than designing.

George Brock

Trident and the taxman

A growing number of people opposed to nuclear arms are withholding the taxes that fund them

Every evening, Edward Stanton waits for a visit from the bailiffs. They have been once this month already and taken away his electric typewriter. He doesn't believe that it can possibly fetch quite enough when they auction it, so they are bound to be back for more.

Stanton is a contract gardener in Cumbria and owes the Inland Revenue precisely £250, the sum he has calculated that the average British taxpayer contributes annually towards Trident.

It's not that he cannot pay the money he owes: he has simply decided not to. He says that the weapons of genocide are illegal, and believes there should be an alternative tax fund for those who oppose nuclear warfare.

Stanton has been pursuing his case through the English courts for three and a half years. He has quoted the Bishop of Lincoln's refusal to pay a levy towards Richard the Lionheart's war in 1191.



Paying for peace: Edward Stanton awaits the bailiffs

France, and a 1917 High Court ruling that, where two statutes are in conflict, the one which follows Christian law prevails. But no judges have been prepared to take him seriously.

Stanton is not alone. Irtham Windson, a retired librarian from Gloucester, spent three weeks in prison this spring for refusing to pay £109.05 to the Inland Revenue. He had sent them a cheque for the money he owed, but had made it out to the Overseas Development Administration. They sent it back to him.

As a formal lobby, the Peace Tax Campaign took shape in the late 1970s when Stanley Keeble, a Cornish farmer whose furniture had already twice been distrainted, joined forces with the Society of Friends and the 1930s pacifist organization, the Peace Pledge Union, and wrote a letter to *The Guardian* with their views. A thousand letters of support came back to them; by mid-1981, some 3,000 members were on their mailing list.

Since then the campaign has been advancing slowly but deliberately: an amendment has gone before Parliament, and there have been several 10-minute rule hearings. None has succeeded, but the pressure is growing.

There are said to be some 300 to 400 families in Britain waiting for the bailiffs. Some are retired people, others are librarians, school-teachers and farmers. The sums involved are not all small: Roger Franklin, a writer who lives near Bath, owes £4,000.

Not one of them really believes that their movement is about to sweep the country. It is a far more private form of protest. The principle, as they see it, is one of morality. The conscientious objectors of two world wars were the right to be exempted from supporting the fighting. "Why", asks Keeble, "should we now be forced to pay for others to kill?"

Caroline Moorehead

Bridge for the Baltic

A £1,000m project to build a bridge and tunnel linking Sweden and Denmark across the 10 miles of the Baltic Straits could move a stage nearer completion next month when the two governments meet to discuss it. But the project, formulated two years ago by a consortium of businessmen to bring the Nordic countries closer to the heart of modern Europe, will face a rough ride from conservationists, particularly those in the countries which it is most designed to help.

The Baltic scheme is just a small part of a colossal engineering plan that would take 20 years to complete and would cost scores of billions of pounds. Its detractors claim it would choke the life out of Europe with a network of motorways, tunnels and bridges.

The industrialists who are pressing the case for the Baltic Straits tunnel and bridge, dubbed Scanlink, include multinational groups like Siemens and Thyssen, and have as their chairman Pehr G. Gyllenhammar, the flamboyant head of Volvo.

In a 43-page report, "Missing Links", the group argues that "on a continental scale, deficiencies in Europe's ground transport system constitute an effective barrier to European economic and social progress". Their remedy is to fill in the gaps with an overall scheme which takes in the Channel road/rail project; Scanlink; a road and rail network south from Oslo which would reduce the travelling time to the centre of Europe by up to 25 hours; and a high-speed European train network.

This would mean a series of new tunnels through the Alps; a huge motorway between the West German city of Lübeck and the Norwegian capital via Gothenburg and Copenhagen; and a cat's cradle of bridges intended ultimately to eliminate the need for ferries across the Fehmarn Belt, Great Belt and Öresund.

In their original statement of the plan, the industrialists said: "Europe is a market of 360 million people still waiting, in some respects, to be served effectively by the continent's own industrial companies. The failure to integrate markets, the fragmentation, goes to the

Plans to link Sweden and Denmark are just part of a huge scheme to transform European travel



heart of Europe's most pressing economic and employment problems".

But they have failed to convince the conservationists that the few environmental problems they foresee will be more than compensated for by the number of jobs created.

The reaction of European conservationists has been predictable. A seminar on the Missing Link proposals was organized last August by Scandinavian environmental groups and an "anti-link action campaign" was launched. "It requires no feat of the imagination to grasp the effects on the environment of such a monstrous expansion of road traffic", wrote one of the protesters in *Acid News*, the Swedish campaigning magazine.

"The enormously increased emissions of nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons would sound the death knell for the forests. Fitting catalytic converters would, in such circumstances, be like trying to bale a sinking boat with a teaspoon."

An agreement between the Swedish and Danish governments to build a fixed link across the Baltic would be the first stage in a process which the conservationists fear

would become progressively harder to stop. The industrialists note: "The key to Scanlink initially is to build the sea crossings. Once this is achieved, Scanlink will in a sense be operational. The build-up of traffic caused by the completion of the fixed links, however, would create the momentum needed for the upgrading of related road and rail systems."

They see Scanlink as "the crucial northern leg of a transcontinental road and rail corridor connecting Scandinavia with the motorway and rail networks of central Europe". The philosophy behind this is straightforward. The Nordic countries rely for their prosperity upon trade with their southern neighbours.

As transport links, especially roads, between other European countries have improved, the Nordic states have slipped into a position of disadvantage.

Travel time by road between Oslo and Hamburg, a journey of about 550 miles, is about 20 hours. The journey from Rotterdam to southern France, roughly the same distance, can be made in half the time.

Tony Samstag

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CONCISE CROSSWORD No 1022

ACROSS
8 Afterbirth tube (9,4)
9 Metal rock (3)
10 S Argentine. Chile (9)
11 Piffer (5)
13 Wretched (7)
16 Bullfighter (7)
19 Decree (5)
22 Rockless (9)
24 Silent (3)
25 Chorus (2,6,5)

DOWN
1 Sever (3,3)
2 Rappel (6)
3 Cardless (8)
4 Put end to (6)
5 Clatter (4)
6 Rebound (6)
7 Publicity responsive public (6)
12 Commercial media body (1,1,1,1)
14 Debar (8)
15 Animal pouch (3)

16 Chaic (6)
17 Prosper (6)
18 Amcord (6)

SOLUTION TO No 1021
ACROSS: 1 Back up 4 Muddle 7 Land 8 Negative 9 Advocate 13 Cry 16 Nitroglycerin 17 Bet 19 Embolden 25 Wacare 25 Mail 26 Conate 27 Make-up
DOWN: 1 Bald 2 Coup d'état 3 Panic 4 Might 5 Duty 6 Lower 10 Ozon 11 Ad lib 12 Excel 13 Constate 14 Yank 15 Shub 18 Edie 20 Mucus 21 Odeum 22 Mess 23 Clip

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THE TIMES DIARY

Summit rematch

Hardly has the dust settled after the Commonwealth mini-summit than another Thatcher-Commonwealth clash looms, this time to be played out under the auspices of the Queen herself. The occasion will be next month's annual meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, an event which the Queen will open and to which Mrs Thatcher has already accepted an invitation. As the Prime Minister recovers in hospital this morning, I bring the grave tidings that delegates from the 100 national and provincial legislatures intend to place South Africa high on the agenda. An entire session will be devoted to the questions "Will the Commonwealth survive apartheid?" and "The Commonwealth - who cares?". After the outcome of the weekend conference African countries, I am told, are clamouring for an additional debate demanding effective sanctions against South Africa. Giving the proceedings an added edge, Her Majesty will speak at the conference. On what? "You'll just have to wait and see", said the Palace yesterday.

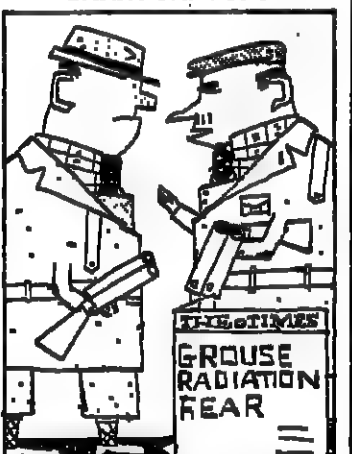
Deadline

An intriguing tale of possible American-Israeli complicity reaches me from Cairo. A few days before the Israelis bombed the PLO headquarters in Tunis last autumn, the Cairo bureau of the American broadcasting station Voice of America received a telex from its Washington headquarters asking for an update of Yasser Arafat's obituary. This caused some surprise among the staff, but all naturally became clear when the bombs fell. Or did it? The Americans, you may recall, denied all foreknowledge of the raid.

Aerial attack

Mind you, things are not always cosy between VOA and the Israelis. There, local ecologists are furious over plans to build a transmitter in the Arava Valley in southern Israel. Not out of distaste for VOA propaganda, of course, but because the station is to be built on the flight path of birds migrating south from Europe. Protesters say that the electromagnetic radiation from the station will upset the birds' internal navigation systems, making them lose their way. The birds' flight over Israel could end up worse than that over Lebanon, where they provide sport for bored militiamen.

BARRY FANTONI



"No problem - Angus will simply organize a night shoot"

It's a date

A fine piece of one-upmanship from Burke's Peerage. Its latest press release announces that the publicity office will be closed "from the birthday of His Imperial Majesty Napoleon" to the "birthday of HRH Prince Alexander Maria Frederick William Carl Joseph of Wurttemberg". August 15 to September 2, in other words - far less interesting - words. The hand-out is dated IV VIII MCMCLXXXVI.

Elevating

Inspired by Prince Andrew's elevation to Duke of York, a correspondent writes to the *Birmingham Mail*: "Wouldn't it be a very pleasant boost for our great city of Birmingham if Prince Edward could be made something like the Duke of Birmingham at some appropriate date: say his 25th birthday?" Edward, Duke of Birmingham certainly has a ring to it and would be a gift to headline writers (*Brummie To Wed - Official*). Are there any other new titles which should be bestowed on those struggling along with just one or two? I await suggestions.

● Fruit trader Anthony Eliakis spotted this poster for Greek peaches and nectarines at Covent Garden. A divine delight, I think you'll agree.



Reagan's space-weapons shift

by Lord Chalfont

The Pentagon's funds for the "Star Wars" research programme, which have been the subject of heated congressional debate in the United States, have just been approved by the narrowest of margins - one vote - in the Senate. This vote came only a few days after the news leaked of a "secret" letter from President Reagan to Mikhail Gorbachev in which he is reported to have proposed a delay of seven and a half years in the deployment of space-based anti-missile defences once the research programme is completed.

American conservative critics argued strongly in the past, week that this threatened delay would sink the prospects for funding since Congress would never vote money for a programme with such doubtful prospects. The narrowness of the vote gives some support to that argument - but it is one based upon a misconception about the strategic significance of the delay.

If it were true that all he had done was to offer a delay of seven and a half years in the deployment of strategic defences, it would be something like offering not to divulge the secret of eternal life before next Christmas. No one who knows anything about strategic defence seriously believes that it would be possible to deploy

space-based systems much before the beginning of the next century.

Reagan's purpose should, however, be taken much more seriously. It is based upon the conception of strategic defence, not as a protective dome over the United States and the West to prevent Russian ballistic missiles getting in, but as a dome over the Soviet Union to prevent them getting out. This homey image is generally attributed to Richard Perle, the Pentagon's persuasive and much maligned advocate; and the immediate reaction to it among critics of strategic defence is that it reflects a desire in Washington to achieve decisive strategic superiority - a situation which the Soviet Union would, understandably, never accept.

The president's answer to this charge is, in effect, to postulate a system which would also provide for a similar dome to prevent American missiles getting out; in other words to share with Russia the benefits of any strategic defence system which current research might show to be practicable. It is, of course, an idea which provokes a combination of scepticism and rage among more hawkish American advisers. They argue that even if it were technically and diplomatically feasible, which is unlikely, it would be dangerously destabilizing.

It is important, however, to realize that the president's offer is not a new thread in the pattern of American thinking on strategic defence. Nor does it represent, as both hawkish and dovish commentators have either lamented or celebrated, any "change of heart" in the White House concerning the use of SDI as a bargaining chip in the arms control dialogue with Moscow. The idea of making drastic cuts in offensive missiles on both sides simultaneously with the deployment of space-based defences has always been a strong element in the thinking of those who believe that strategic defence offers the possibility of a move from a deterrent posture based on retaliation alone to one based principally on ballistic missile defence.

It has, therefore, always been envisaged that, at the end of the research period, there would be discussions with the Soviet Union, and America's allies, on how to manage the transition from one strategic posture to the other. The seven and a half years delay fills just that need.

All this may, it is true, prove too difficult to negotiate with the Soviet Union. What is also important about it, however, is that it reflects a determined attempt on Reagan's part to create a psychological climate in which a meeting

with Gorbachev later this year might lead to serious verifiable arms control agreements; and especially to substantial reductions in the number of offensive nuclear missiles on both sides.

Reagan and Gorbachev agreed in Geneva last November on the general principle of a 50 per cent reduction, and there have been recent signs of a willingness by the Soviet Union to follow this up with serious negotiations. There are, as well, real possibilities of progress in the reduction of conventional forces and intermediate range missiles, control of chemical weapons and - in the much longer term - a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

There are signs in the US of the emergence of a coherent strategic conception which might lead to agreements designed, not just to fulfil some vague idea of "arms control" for its own sake, but to move away from the posture of threatened devastation towards deep cuts in nuclear weapons stockpiles and a safer, more stable balance of power between the Soviet Union and the West. If that is what the president's letter is meant to achieve - and the Senate vote has made it possible - it should not be lightly dismissed.

The author was Minister for Disarmament 1964-67.

Peter Brimelow on stock market sages who outdo Wall Street experts

Gurus with a gilt edge

America is a large country filled with a restless population convinced of the virtues of self-help, and one of the more popular means of self-help is owning shares: more than 40 million Americans - one in seven of the population - are estimated to own shares directly. The gurus of these 40 million are the investment letter writers, a breed who depend on their colourful characters and loudhailer-selling tactics to peddle their wares at subscription rates of £45-£200 a year. They are disdained by Wall Street, but recent evidence suggests that a sizeable minority of these homespun advisers are outperforming the Stock Exchange sophisticates.

There are charlatans in the investment letter business (they are not unknown among stockbrokers) but the letters in general have been more successful precisely where orthodox opinion has been wrong. For example, in the 1970s Wall Street persistently underestimated the danger of inflation. Influential letters like the *International Money Letter* equally persistently recommended gold. Calling Schultz a gold bug appeared less of an insult as the price climbed above \$800 in 1980 (he baled out at that point and has since been negative on gold).

The first real evidence of the soundness of some of the investment letters came with the advent in 1980 of the Washington-based *Hulbert Financial Digest*. Naïve comment has focused on Hulbert's revelation that the overwhelming majority of letters do not beat the market, and that well known figures such as the *Financial Success Report's* Howard Ruff, author of several best-selling books, play tricks like ceasing to mention unsuccessful recommendations. (More sophisticated observers know that academic research long ago established that professional money managers do not do better.)

The results show, however, that a dozen out of the 90 investment letters Hulbert follows do seem to be able to outperform the market consistently. The success contradicts the Efficient Market Hypothesis, the dominant theory among academics for a generation, which argues that the stock market reflects all information so quickly that it cannot be out-guessed.

More recently, younger academics have been discovering "anomalies" in the efficiency of the market. For example, there is the "small firm effect", the ten-



dency of shares of low-capitalized companies with relatively small dollar amounts of stock outstanding to outperform the market, and the "insider effect", the tendency of stocks to appreciate after purchases have been reported to the authorities by company officers and major shareholders. The successful investment letters often have their roots in one or more of these anomalies, like plants growing in a wall.

Already there has been some academic recognition that the stocks rated "most timely" by the long-established *Value Line* service have outperformed the market for 30 years. Now it appears there are others. And a varied lot they are. Charles Allmon of *Growth Stock Outlook* is a former photographer for *National Geo-*

graphic magazine. Al Frank of the *Prudent Speculator* was once an education professor, and before that a shell (decoy) player in a Las Vegas casino. And Martin Zweig of the *Zweig Forecast* taught college-level finance until a year or so ago. Their methods are various, often theoretically incompatible. But they seem to make them work.

The investment letter industry's more entertaining characters have not helped its image much. In the early 1980s, Joseph E. Granville of the *Granville Market Letter* achieved genuine superstar status, travelling a million miles in four years to speak at heavily publicized meetings, his regular platform guests including a chimpanzee named Dwarfman in honour of a critical financial columnist, Dan Dorfman, and an

iguana named Greenspan after the noted Wall Street economist, Alan Greenspan. Once, in Tucson, Arizona, he began his meeting by walking across a swimming pool on a plank concealed just below the surface, telling his audience "And now you know!"

Granville's apotheosis came in 1981, when his January 6 sell signal, telephoned to subscribers in the middle of the night, precipitated a stock market collapse. But the next year he completely missed the bull market that roared into life that August (and in fact has only recently admitted, to his distinctly smaller readership, that it wasn't just a mirage).

Granville's sell signal was much cited here in early July, when the stock market performed another record nose-dive following a sell signal put out by an investment letter: Robert R. Prechter's *Elliott Wave Theorist*. But Prechter is a very different character. He is a serious young Yale graduate who lives quietly with his wife and children in the mountains of north Georgia, linked to the world by computer and telephone.

Prechter is unmistakably sincere in his belief that market moves are governed by a complex rhythm first discerned by a Los Angeles accountant some 30 years ago. And in the past few years his predictions have in fact been remarkable. Like Granville, Prechter is an accomplished musician - before getting interested in the stock market he spent years on the road with a rock group. Unlike Granville, however, Prechter is not purveying unfounded gloom: just a stumble of 10% or so, he says, and then the bull market will be ready to charge again.

Some of the investment letter writers began in their spare time and, as a result of their demonstrated prowess, are now managing large amounts of money. In the American pantheon, the ideal of a Log Cabin to White House career has been supplemented by that of Kitchen Table to Financial Institution.

It may seem improbable that these outsiders can beat the Wall Street establishment - almost as improbable as two Ohio farmboys inventing the first flying machine. Peter Brimelow is the author of *The Wall Street Gurus: How You Can Profit From Investment Newsletters* (Random House, New York, \$19.95).

the shade the Islamic Revolution itself."

Reza has also said that the human-wave tactics will be applied simultaneously along the whole 700 miles of the front. While he knows that Iraq still possesses huge stocks of weapons with which it has, in the past, mowed down lightly-armed waves of Iranian infantry, he also knows that Iran would need to break through in only one location to threaten Baghdad, or cut off the south of Iraq from its north.

Most military specialists believe that Iraq's resistance is unlikely to collapse in the face of Iran's offensive. The prospect is, therefore, for continued Iranian gains in the southern and central sectors of the front.

If such gains were sizeable, Iran could afford to sit upon them for the time being in the hope of either annexing them - and their rich oil deposits - as reparations for the war, or to use them in peace negotiations with the Arabs once the Ayatollah has gone.

Such territorial gains could make Iran a neighbour - for a number of years, at least - of the pro-Western states of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. And, as the gains would be sufficient to fuel Iran's revolutionary fervour for a while yet, it would not be a friendly neighbour - a prospect which neither Kuwait nor Saudi Arabia can view with any equanimity.

Ronald Butt

A lost peace in politics

"I cannot help referring to my old opinion, which is now supported by more weight than I ever expected, and wonder that a man can be found in England who has bread that will be concerned in public business," wrote the Duke of Shrewsbury to Lord Somers in 1701. "Had I a son, I would sooner breed him a cobbler than a courtier, and a hangman than a statesman."

Since politics has lately become subject to Murphy's law, and things have been going wrong in ways which it would have seemed mad to predict, it is tempting to think that such sentiments must strike a chord with at least some in high places just now. Yet it is impossible to imagine, Mrs Thatcher echoing (even *mutatis mutandis*) these classic words of Whig disillusion, let alone emulating Shrewsbury's political conduct. For he was often in firm of purpose, holding high office but (after oscillating uneasily between William III and St Germain) ultimately throwing it up. Like the Duke of Omnium, who had to be cajoled into overcoming a fastidious disinclination for office, Shrewsbury no doubt felt he had done his country a favour by accepting it. Moreover, whether or not such men thought that the quiet management of their own estates was a finer occupation for a nobleman than politics at least they had estates to fall back on.

Mrs Thatcher, however, is a professional politician who is activated by will and conviction, and pursues a calling that today absorbs far more of any politician's life and personality than Shrewsbury could have conceived. She is never in firm of purpose, and disdain for the political rough-and-tumble is not in her nature. What is more, she and the generality of politicians do not only lack great estates and the influence of grand independent social status: the pursuit of politics also leaves them no room for anything else.

It is true that, at the end of the political road, city directorships may beckon some ex-ministers in their decline and fall. But directorships are not 18th-century dukedoms and in the early stages of withdrawal symptoms from the drug of politics, modest consolation prizes are all they are.

Given time, however, the money, the freedom and the comparative ease will no doubt persuade the likes of Patrick Jenkin to wonder why they waited so long and endured so much. How did they ever bear a seven-day week and a 15-hour day, and for such a thankless end? It may not instantly strike them that nowadays politics can be as sound a road to financial independence as financial independence was once to politics.

Time to think, and the lack of it, is really the heart of the distinction between the Duke of Shrewsbury's kind of politics and our own. Time is the great sacrifice on the modern altar of politics. Although political

power is real and politicians do change things, educating their departments on the great issues of the day, they also take too much pleasure for the health of politics in the illusion of power created by those innumerable decisions which are ordained by the facts and advice presented to them (facts being as manoeuvrable a commodity as advice) and which they could not possibly settle themselves. The lure of politics can end up being not simply power but the illusion of power created by perpetual motion.

Funnelled from place to place by their private offices and their official diaries, some acquire a perverse pride in not knowing what they will be doing this time tomorrow, what factory they will visit or what committees they will chair. It is apparently quite satisfying to be able to say on the *World at One*, and with the munificence of a political Paul Getty: "And that is why I have just spent £5 million on this or that or the other."

Modern politics is a profession leaving little time for reflection. Busy-ness is its status symbol, and the outward and visible sign of authority is the hurried demeanour which politicians think it advisable to assume. Once all was dignity and statesmen were stately: who could imagine Gladstone or Churchill running even in Macmillan's day a certain statesmanlike dignity of movement was still in order. But now the politicians scurry out of their departments and into Number 10 (or their party headquarters and departments) at a half-run, as though anxious to make it clear through the television camera that they haven't a moment to lose and have only just been able to make it. It hardly looks very dignified, and if you come to think of it, doesn't actually convince the rest of us that they really take time enough to reflect on where they are going and what they should do. They should try a casual stroll.

To the extent that the hurry is convincing, it shows how right Mrs Thatcher is to want government to do less in hope that what it does it may do better. Time to think is the lost attribute of modern politics, perhaps an even greater loss than independence, the roots outside politics and the willingness to resign on a point of principle enjoyed by the Dukes of Shrewsbury and Omnium. Under Murphy's law, thinking-time is particularly useful.

Politicians do not take enough of it. They have to rely the weight of their burdens demands it) too much on aides, officials and pressmen to think for them. It occurs to me, as this column goes into suspension for a week or two, that they do need their holidays (perhaps even more than I do) and they should have more of them for our sakes as well as their own. Even the most successful of them are not greatly to be envied. The Duke of Shrewsbury grumbled too much. He didn't know how good he was having it.

moreover... Miles Kington

West End's best bet

The other day I went to see a West End musical. I don't normally go to musicals more than about once a decade. My parents took me to see *Salad Days* in the 1950s, which was certainly the best show ever written about a hunt for a piano. I went to see *Hair* in the 1960s, and thought it was nowhere near as good as *Salad Days*. I saw something by Sondheim in the 1970s and thought musicals were still going downhill; and last year I was taken to see *Starlight Express*, and thought musicals had reached rock bottom.

So the other day, when I went to a musical, I must have had a very special reason for going. I did: I didn't know it was a musical. It was as far as I knew, merely a comedy called *The Gambler*, featuring Mel Smith, which had transferred from the Hampstead Theatre to the Comedy Theatre, and was about to close. Occasionally I am electrified into action by notices that something is closing, and so I sped along to the Comedy, quite unaware that *The Gambler* was a musical.

Well, whatever it is, it's wonderful. It's the story of a compulsive amateur gambler (Bob Goody), shadowed by a professional gambler (Smith), and his 24-hour progress through a race-track, the dogs, a casino and a private poker game, which takes in most of the major forms of gambling except the football pools, always difficult to dramatize.

The four men on stage play lots of parts, from barmaid to bookies, from gangsters to punters. The four musicians behind them drift in and out of the action as song-backers, incidental musicians, even actors. The scenery is mostly confined to chairs, lights and flashing roulette signs. But between them they conjure up so many different vignettes, characters and settings that the mind boggles.

Take one example: the big horse race is portrayed by the four of them standing on chairs, staring through binoculars and reacting to Smith's gradually mounting commentary. Nothing more than that; yet the race is a genuinely exciting one for the audience, as our emotions are blatantly unkered with by a script that knows that a

racing commentary is very often more thrilling than the race itself.

Take another example: any of the big train races in *Starlight Express*, all of which I found marvellously boring. At the cost of however many millions, the theatre was revamped into a 3-D roller-skating track around which actors went pretending to be trains, accompanied by dreary music and interspersed with unappealing lyrics.

At the cost of a few bob, Mel Smith and his mates - the script is credited to three of the cast - stood on chairs and produced a far more exciting race, through theatrical means. *The Gambler*, by the way, also has good lyrics and extremely interesting, slightly jagged music by Richard Briers. Andrew Lloyd-Webber is often quoted as saying that he wishes people wouldn't knock him for earning so much money. I think he's wrong: people knock him for not writing better music. I have nothing against him earning so much money - I just can't see how he earns it - and I wouldn't even have dreamt of mentioning it now, if it were not that I am enraged to see such a fine musical as *The Gambler* come off at the end of this week, and *Starlight Express* go on until the next century. I gather that the Comedy is being emptied to bring in another show, so it is possible that *The Gambler* may reappear somewhere else. Personally, I'd rip out the Victoria Palace and put it on there.

Odd, really, when you think that I like trains and am not much interested in gambling. But then I remember Irving Wardle saying, when *Starlight Express* opened, that train enthusiasts would be the last people to enjoy the show. And I have never met anyone who knew much about Argentina and enjoyed *Evita*...

Don't get me wrong. I am not totally anti-*Starlight Express*. The production has some very nice model trains which run through the auditorium. I enjoyed those, rather more than anything else that ran through the auditorium. And they run the model engines before curtain up, so you can enjoy them and leave before the show actually starts.



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SPRIT OF COMPETITION

This year the Department of Trade celebrates 200 years of continuous administrative life. What better way, it might be thought, for the spirit of the old Board of Trade to be magnified than for Mr Paul Channon to announce (as he did yesterday) that he wished to sustain competition in domestic electronics and telecommunications markets and so to forbid a merger between two leading suppliers.

How convenient policy would be, if government could simply invoke Gladstonian free trade virtues, utilize the Monopoly and Mergers Commission to keep the supply side competitive and keep its hands off. How clean cut that would be. But how unrealistic.

British capitalism does not work that way, not any more, and certainly not in the supply of electronics and telecommunications equipment. For "competition" (which more often than not means market regulation by monopolistic suppliers) to be made a fetish at this stage is myopic. The State cannot keep its hands off when practically all demand is in the hands of government itself, or monopolistic private purchasers such as British Telecom.

Today's Department of Trade and Industry is concerned with industrial sponsorship, the government's interest in promoting the better organization of industry for the sake of efficiency and international competitiveness. Its officials' evidence to the

Monopolies and Mergers Commission said the merger of the General Electric Company and Plessey could create an industrial structure in which some of the important challenges facing the electronics industry in the United Kingdom might be addressed. Those challenges come from abroad; without restructuring (fostered, when necessary, by the state) key parts of domestic industry will go under.

In the commission's report, it is the dissenting Mr Colin Bailieu, who understands this. The telecommunications and defence electronics industries are international. That fact demands backing domestic winners, helping them to the size and sophistication needed to compete. Even to talk about a global market is a trifle naive: there is ITT, AT&T, the Japanese, and a few potential European competitors.

In the terms of that restricted market, nice points about domestic competition have to be severely qualified. The two firms together are smaller than a number of their successful international competitors: their capacity in research and development would inevitably be augmented by their merger.

The merger of GEC and Plessey brooks no textbook principles about competition for the simple reason that the markets, national and international, in which these firms operate conform to no model. The firms already collaborate, primarily on the System X

switchboard: here the commission does want "rationalization" to take place, meaning some merger of the two firms' activities.

Elsewhere the arena of head to head competition between the firms is small, despite the attempt by the Ministry of Defence to quantify the costs of absence of competition in defence electronics tendering. The MOD—which will always have great leverage as a source of demand—lives happily with single suppliers in several areas of procurement.

Merger would not, the MOD admits, kill competitive procurement of electronic equipment. The Government is happy (for it has little choice) to purchase defence equipment from overseas; moreover the international market for defence electronics is already highly competitive.

The phrase "industrial policy" offends many because of its association with bureaucratic plans for controlling the commanding heights, and second-guessing investors' judgement about profitability. Those associations should not, however, blight the notion that government can legitimately take an interest in shaping an industrial sector and align state policies on procurement and competition accordingly.

The absence of such a policy was a recurrent theme in the Westland affair. The absence of such a policy has, apparently, allowed Mr Channon to bow to the Ministry of Defence and in forbidding this merger make an error of judgement.

NEW VICTIMS, NEW FEARS

If a Government Minister is heard using the word "last" when speaking about the Provisional IRA, it is a reasonable assumption that he has entered the world of wishful thinking. Mr Tom King implied this week that the IRA had begun murdering civilians who supply the security forces in Northern Ireland as a final bankrupt gesture. There may—and there should—come a time when it will be accurate to talk (as the Prime Minister did at the time of the Maze hunger strike five years ago) of the IRA playing its last card. But that time has not come.

It is not defeatist but realistic to recognise that, in the short run at least, the IRA has discovered a newly effective method of hindering the security forces. The new civilian category under threat must put thousands of people under threat: however strenuous the efforts at protection of the RUC, or however effective the substitution of army labour and expertise, there will still be plenty of frightened individuals and firms.

The maintenance of an effective long-term security policy in Northern Ireland depends on the recognition

that the initiative will sometimes appear to have been won temporarily by the terrorists. Since the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the IRA has been looking for a new technique to renew in the community the fears which had slightly diminished as a result of security successes of recent years. They were in no particular hurry since they were happy to leave the government and the police with their hands full of unionist opposition for the time being. The Provisionals have been in existence for sixteen years; nothing is to be gained by underestimating their tactical resilience.

But it is also possible to exaggerate the potency of this new development in their campaign. With the internment anniversary at the end of this week, they are guaranteed amplified publicity each summer during the quiet days of August. They have lately avoided much deliberate civilian murder on the cynical calculation that it will undermine their political support in the nationalist community.

That political support currently stands at high levels. Will it survive a campaign

which explicitly threatens the lives of Catholic businessmen and workers? In particular, will that support survive when the only way the intended victims can lift threats against their lives is by losing their jobs? Those additions to the already appalling unemployment levels in the province can hardly improve. Provisional Sinn Féin's fringe.

In a long terrorist campaign against an implacable and well-rooted enemy, it is not easy for a weary public to keep hold of the centrally important fact of the conflict between terrorist and community. Terrorism, as this episode amply demonstrates, is the creation of fear. Courage, as Mark Twain remarked, is not absence of fear but mastery of it.

Fear of this kind can only be mastered by a community's defenders. To do their job, they themselves must be defused. In this case, the security forces may have to pause while they rearrange their own security arrangements, divert resources to protect those under threat or spend extra money to replace the services of frightened contractors.

TRAVELLING MORE HOPEFULLY

Motorway service stations were conceived as oases—watering holes where drivers could refresh their camels and themselves before taking on 50 more miles of featureless landscape, distant Birmingham shimmering like a mirage under the noonday sun. That was the theory anyway.

In practice, drivers have too often found the motorways welcome relief from the service stations in between: from their queues, crowded lavatories, high prices and mediocre food. There has never very much chance of travelling hopefully.

For this the British public has had only itself to blame. For one thing, the average family leaves behind it a spoor of litter which—thanks to modern science—has been rendered indestructible. Service stations at least centralised the problem which otherwise might have turned the verges of our trunk roads into alfresco restaurants and trash cans.

For another, the standards of service demanded by the populace have always been notoriously low. Even the great British breakfast and the cup of hot strong tea, with which our cuisine has been

identified, have been elusive targets for the discriminating traveller. The public reaction to inadequate standards has been not so much to complain but to turn it all into a long-running joke. This has had its effect over a number of years, to the extent that the modern Blackpool boarding house and the much-maligned British Rail sandwich might now claim to be unfairly done by. But for those who seek faster results, the reaction of British consumers has always been meekly expressed.

The latest report by *Which?* is welcome therefore for two reasons. In the first place it confirms that this self-appointed consumers' watchdog is still prowling outside its kennel. Its survey of all 56 motorway service stations in five months this year, during which most were visited twice, was a useful exercise.

It is doubly welcome, however, because it would seem to confirm a general rise in standards since the last inspection was carried out six years ago. While criticisms remain, things in the eyes of *Which?* are definitely looking up.

This is important for reasons which are far from trivial. A great number of tourists

from Europe and elsewhere visit this country every year and take to the roads in their family cars. The motorways are the arteries on which they cruise from one end of Britain to the other, and the service stations are for them part of the national image. And by no means all other nations are as tolerant as this one of indifferent standards of service.

It is also important in the interests of public safety that drivers should be encouraged to stop as often as they can and that when they do, they should find suitable relaxation in pleasant and efficient surroundings. A notoriously poor service station can encourage the weary traveller to carry for a few miles more, at possible risk to himself and others on the road.

The direct blame for poor supervision of standards must be placed on the Government—which does in fact come in for some criticism in the report. But it is pressure from consumers which stirs governments into action—and competition from each other which makes service firms look to their tea urns and prime their pumps. This would seem to have worked this time anyway.

Bleak outlook

From Mr Christopher Carrier
Sir, The theatre in London may be "apt to hibernate in summer" (Arts page, August 4), but, surely, in *The Times* it should as well.

Yours faithfully,
C. CARRIER,
149 Fiedburgh Drive,
Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands.
August 4.

Lost awakening?

From Mr Oliver Hinch
Sir, Geoffrey Munn's article (July 26) about destruction and vandalism in our decaying cemeteries reminded me of an example of "lawn conversion" in the thirties. Because of its deplorable state the authorities decided to convert a cemetery in Northampton to a green oasis with seats and trees. They proposed to remove the tombstones and monuments and

place the legible ones up against the surrounding walls, but to ensure the area's recognition as a consecrated ground a few of the flat tombstones were to be left *in situ*. One morning a workman was seen chalking on the selected tombstones: "Not to come up". Yours etc.

OLIVER HINCH,
27 Lingwood Gardens,
Osterley, Middlesex.
July 28.

Failure to agree on sanctions

From Mr Dale Scarborough
Sir, Your editorial (August 4) supporting Mrs Thatcher's opposition to economic sanctions against South Africa claims to present a rational analysis of the issue, yet I can find in your argument little that could properly be described as rational.

After suggesting, for example, that a "small sacrifice of minor sanctions" should be employed, as a gesture towards Commonwealth unity, you argue that the failure of such sanctions should be taken as proof that sanctions do not work. According to this logic, the inadvisability of painting your house can be deduced from the failure of an inadequate coat of paint.

You argue that the imposition of sanctions would reduce our influence with Pretoria by severing our economic ties with the State. Rational analysis would conclude from this that the British Government should be actively encouraging investment in South Africa. If mutually beneficial economic links are to be used as a political lever, it can only be through the threat of their severance.

It is a sad day when specious arguments are presented in the name of rational analysis. If this is the *Times's* reaction to the South African crisis, we wonder the South African Government treats British policy with contempt.

Yours,
DALE SCARBORO,
10 Fairfield Walk,
Leckhampton,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.
August 4.

From Professor Julius Gould
Sir, At least twice in recent days Mr Malcolm Fraser has broadcast his view that the British Government should show itself on "the right side of history" by pursuing his line on the future of South Africa.

This demand is presumptuous and its assumptions are absurd. It is neither sensible nor responsible to claim that history has a "right side". Even if it had one, I suggest, without disrespect, that such momentous knowledge would not first be hastily vouchsafed, on a privileged basis, to any former Commonwealth prime minister, however vocal and controversial. Yours faithfully,
JULIUS GOULD,
Reform Club,
Pall Mall, SW1.
August 1.

From Sir Richard Dobson
Sir, This country is at a moment of crisis. Should not the Prime Minister recall Parliament and cause a free vote to be taken in the House of Commons on the matter of sanctions against South Africa? Yours faithfully,
RICHARD DOBSON,
16 Marchmont Road,
Richmond, Surrey.

From Mr R. J. White
Sir, The failure of the Commonwealth summit on South Africa is surely testament to the shoddy performance by a British Prime Minister for many decades.

All-in schools

From Councillor Sidney Grose
Sir, In an interesting review of comprehensive schools Anne Sofer (feature, July 28) makes several errors of fact which lead her to conclusions so dated that they offer no new stimulus to the success of a courageous experiment.

Here in Richmond upon Thames the Conservatives in 1973 enthusiastically introduced comprehensive schools and London's first tertiary college in 1977 and have given their unwavering support ever since—as it must be said, have the Alliance party, who took control of the council in 1983. (It is fiction to write of a Conservative attempt to convert to a selective system in 1984 causing them to lose control of a council of which they had already lost control in 1983).

Where Anne Sofer's assessment of the comprehensive system is faulty is that she is obsessed with

average results and she has drawn conclusions far too early in its development. Let her concentrate on the remarkable achievements of top performers, as in this borough, and take comfort that such standards are attainable by all.

Some of us have always been cautious about the time scale necessary to achieve gigantic change—we thought it likely that progress would sometimes falter and occasionally disappoint. It was at such times when our high hopes were not realised, that we determined, in the words with which Anne Sofer concludes her article, "what we need is a dramatic raising of sights, not an insidious undermining of the whole system".

Yours faithfully,
SIDNEY GROSE,
Municipal Offices,
London, Borough of Richmond upon Thames,
Twickenham, Middlesex.
July 31.

From Mrs H. P. Madden
Sir, I write with reference to your letters (July 30, August 2) on the Great Eastern laying the first Atlantic cable. My great-grandfather, Sir Curtis Lampson, vice chairman of the Atlantic Telegraph Company, sent a message from the Valencia station on August 17, 1858. It commenced 2.33, ended 2.41 and read, "We got your current but can't make word out".

I have a piece of that cable, a small portion of the actual message in Morse code.

Yours faithfully,
JANE DE VIERE MADDEN,
3 Old Rectory Close,
Thorpe St Andrew,
Norwich, Norfolk.
August 4.

From Mr R. F. Coates
Sir, The Bishop of Birmingham (August 1) claims that the application of sanctions is the only peaceful means of persuading the South African Government. Peaceful? Sanctions are intended to hurt, to harm, to starve into submission. They have to be enforced by a naval blockade. They are one of the first acts of war. Is this Christ's teaching? Yours faithfully,
R. F. COATES,
Park House,
West Rasea,
Market Rasen, Lincolnshire.

From Mr C. M. S. Whitelaw
Sir, I hope that the Prime Minister of India, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, is making the same effort to eliminate untouchability in India as he is making to abolish apartheid in South Africa. Yours faithfully,
C. M. S. WHITELAW,
1 Lansdowne Crescent,
Edinburgh.

From Mr Raymond Franks
Sir, Must it always be "Thatcher does this..." or "Thatcher does that..."? It seems unfair that this poor lady should be the butt of every criticism of Government policy and the recipient of most of the rotten eggs thrown by the mannerless and the undisciplined. "This must be seen as a tribute to her splendid qualities, but tends to obscure the fact that many millions voted for the Conservative Party and its policies and not for any particular individual leader." Yours faithfully,
RAYMOND FRANKS,
Stables Cottage,
Weald Manor,
Bampton, Oxfordshire.

Great Eastern

From Mrs H. P. Madden
Sir, I write with reference to your letters (July 30, August 2) on the Great Eastern laying the first Atlantic cable. My great-grandfather, Sir Curtis Lampson, vice chairman of the Atlantic Telegraph Company, sent a message from the Valencia station on August 17, 1858. It commenced 2.33, ended 2.41 and read, "We got your current but can't make word out".

I have a piece of that cable, a small portion of the actual message in Morse code.

Yours faithfully,
JANE DE VIERE MADDEN,
3 Old Rectory Close,
Thorpe St Andrew,
Norwich, Norfolk.
August 4.

that they are suitable for consideration by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council might imply enforceability by the courts. It is in the nature of conventions that, while they may be recognised to exist by the courts, the courts cannot enforce a convention and certainly not against the sovereignty of Parliament if enacted in statute.

The Queen's role

From Dr J. F. McDowd
Sir, Constitutional conventions, according to Dicey, were intended as "a whole system of political morality, a whole code of precepts for the guidance of public men". By their nature they represent the morality of the Constitution, but as they are unwritten they are difficult to enforce. When given a legal meaning, Dicey distinguished conventions from law and believed that conventions "are not in reality laws at all since they are not enforced by the courts". Geoffrey Marshall (feature, July 28) obscures Dicey's legal meaning of conventions. His suggestion

Market forces on market places

From Mr Harvey R. Cole
Sir, In virtually every highly populated part of the country plans are being put forward for large so-called "regional" shopping centres. At present at least 47 are awaiting determination.

Whilst there is undoubtedly a role to be played by a limited number of such developments it is essential that they should be carefully sited so as to ensure against over-development. The planning system needs to be invoked for this purpose; the issues raised cannot be satisfactorily left to market forces alone.

In certain cases, however, where, for example, the rules of a particular enterprise zone do not rule out retail development or where a local district council owns a site—planning permission can be forthcoming almost automatically, and with no proper evaluation of proposals.

So far from discouraging a piecemeal approach to the problem, the Government seems to be encouraging it. On occasion, as for example at Whitstable, the secretary of state has approved, on appeal, smaller superstore developments in circumstances which, it is agreed, allow scope for only one, leaving competition to determine the outcome. More seriously still, in Penzance, he recently accepted the principle that although one of three sites proposed for shopping development was clearly the best, that was not, in itself, "a relevant consideration".

All such schemes should be called in automatically by the Department of the Environment and a special inquiry, on the lines of a planning commission, should be held for each of the country's conurbations of other areas which attract these applications. Yours etc.
HARVEY R. COLE,
9 Clifton Road,
Winchester, Hampshire.

National Gallery

From Mr T. H. Hughes-Davies
Sir, War is much too serious a thing to be left to military men—or education to teachers, medicine to doctors, papers to editors, or ships to masters. Management has reached the National Gallery, and is even eyeing the lawyers. Mr. Gould (August 5) should not expect a scholar in charge rather than in attendance. Yours sincerely,
T. H. HUGHES-DAVIES,
Slades Cottage, Breamore,
Fordingbridge, Hampshire.

Sex and the Church

From Father Peter Knott, SJ
Sir, In his article, "Cynicism and sexual morality", August 4, Clifford Longley gives the impression that the Catholic Church believes that sex has been designed by God for one single purpose which is the reproduction of the species. The following quote from the second Vatican Council should help to correct this view: Marriage is not merely for the procreation of children: its nature as an indissoluble compact between two people and the good of the children demand that the mutual love of the partners be properly shown, that this love should grow and mature. Even in cases where despite the intense desire of the spouses there are no children marriage still retains the character of being a whole manner and communion of life and preserves its value and indissolubility (*Gaudium et Spes*, 50). Yours faithfully,
PETER KNOTT,
St Anthony's, Slough, Berkshire.

Wrong rig

From Mr F. R. Welsh
Sir, I hope nautical readers will not take too seriously the picture of an irascible captain between two people and the good of the children demand that the mutual love of the partners be properly shown, that this love should grow and mature. Even in cases where despite the intense desire of the spouses there are no children marriage still retains the character of being a whole manner and communion of life and preserves its value and indissolubility (*Gaudium et Spes*, 50). Yours faithfully,
PETER KNOTT,
St Anthony's, Slough, Berkshire.

Worst enemy?

From Mr Ray Ward
Sir, I'm not surprised the Northern Ireland MPs were cross about Professor Thompson's Dogs (Access to Foodshops) Bill (letter, August 1). Perhaps the professor told them of his apparent belief that Northern Ireland is part of Great Britain. Yours faithfully,
RAY WARD,
38 Lancaster Gate, W2.

Dicey's legal understanding and meaning. Little could be gained from a codification of conventions as they are presently unwritten, sometimes they are obscure, and they are non-legal rules of the Constitution. This is not to diminish the importance of conventions, because they properly belong to generally accepted political practices which are not enforced by the courts. Yours sincerely,
JOHN F. MCDOWDNEY,
University of Warwick,
School of Law,
Coventry, West Midlands.
July 30.

ON THIS DAY

AUGUST 7 1821

PIRACY AND MURDER

(Extract of a letter, dated Stornaway, July 27.)

.... Late on Monday, the 23d inst., in that blowing a hard gale from the southward, I received information from a Mr. Mac Iver, tacksman of the farm of Tolstaig, near the But of the Lewis, that on Sunday evening his tenants had perceived a wreck at some distance from the land, and that on going towards her they discovered the wreck to be a copper-bottomed schooner, waterlogged, and on her beam ends; that they made fast to her, in hopes of being able to bring the wreck to some place of safety, in which they would have probably eventually succeeded, but for the gale of wind which had just then come on, and which drove the vessel that night on shore into a cove near Tolstaig-head. In the morning it was discovered that the vessel's paring that her cargo consisted of hogheads of oil, beer, wax, paper, &c. which were floating about in all directions....

On my rising early the next morning (Tuesday) I met the collector of customs, who informed me that a boat's crew had been surprised the preceding evening within a few miles of Stornaway, which, from the information of a boy who had turned King's evidence, proved to have been a set of pirates, who had murdered their captain and a seaman; and having plundered the ship of a considerable quantity of specie off the east side of the island, on Sunday morning last, scuttled the vessel and abandoned her, but were, from the interposition of Providence, prevented by the gale of wind from effecting their purpose of reaching the main land. The crew being immediately made prisoners, a prearrangement was taken before four magistrates, and at which I attended for three days and the following narrative is a brief statement of what was elucidated from them:—

The schooner *Jeon*, of about 100 tons, owned by a Jew house of the name of Louis, or Lewes, at Gibraltar, loaded there in the month of May a cargo, consisting of sweet oil, beer, wax, jars of olives, paper, &c., and 38,000 to 40,000 dollars in specie, and sailed from thence on the 19th of May; her crew consisting of the master, Thomas Johnson, the mate, Peter Heyman, three British, one Italian, one French seaman, and a Maltese boy, the captain, and Paterson, seaman, were murdered on the morning of the 7th of June, then in 6th degree north lat., when piratical possession was taken of the vessel, and her papers thrown overboard. After various schemes being proposed, it was resolved to steer north for the Lewis, and afterwards to land on the east of Scotland with the specie they first made the north of Ireland, then the island of Barra, where they bought a large boat, for which they paid about 15l. The captain, now formerly mate, assuming the name of Rogers, and pretending to be from New York, bound to Archangel.

On last Saturday morning they sailed from thence, and steered their course to the northward, inside of the Long Island, until being in the evening abreast of Stornaway, they decided on a vessel which they took to be a cutter; this immediately caused them to alter their former resolution, and induced them to determine on abandoning the schooner, and making the best of their way to the main land in the large boat. Having accordingly proceeded to the northward, they collected their specie, and shipped the same into the boat, with their other effects, and having scuttled the schooner, finally abandoned her. They then steered for the main land, when next morning they were providentially overtaken by the gale of wind which forced them to put into the creek in which they were discovered: they at first came to a grapple, and continued some time riding by it, but at length were driven on shore, and the boat stove. This put them under the necessity of secreting the specie, and they accordingly buried the greater part of it in the sand, and the rest they concealed among the baggage, every man's share being previously divided, and sewed up in canvas bags, each taking charge of his own, trusting that they could have repaired their boat and put to sea again when the weather moderated. In this situation they were surprised by the officers of customs, when the pretended captain, under the name of Ledly, (having formerly at Barra gone under the name of Rogers), trumped up a story of shipwreck, and said that he had been mate of a ship from New York to Liverpool (The *Maltese boy*, however, found an opportunity of communicating to the Surveyor of Customs the information of the atrocious act that had been committed. They were immediately made prisoners, and after a very minute investigation before the magistrates, they fully admitted the facts communicated by the boy....

Degree of doubt

From Mr M. T. Phillips
Sir, According to your correspondent (report, July 29) "British Rail has a number of crossings in the pipeline.... but these will now be put on ice".

Though contrasting in degrees Celsius, this reminds one of the beleaguered football manager who, when asked last season what he intended to do about his team's plight, replied that he had several irons in the fire, but that he was keeping them close to his chest. Yours faithfully,
M. T. PHILLIPS,
12 The Mall, East Sheen, SW14.

THE ARTS

Television Mystery selling

Diverse Reports (Channel 4) bowed out with a quick examination of the way that the media have managed to create an aura of mystique around crack — the smokeable, potentially lethal refinement of cocaine hydrochloride which has earned handsome column-inches and air-time before it has substantially arrived on the British drug scene.

The programme argued that such coverage has inadvertently (and perhaps, callously) had an effect parallel to the Government's disastrous overstatement of the case against heroin. This was hardly borne out by the vox-pop interviews: some had heard of the drug, others had not (in other words, some read newspapers and watch television, others do not).

The main thrust consisted of inviting an advertising agency to imagine that a client had requested a campaign for the substance, and to this end a couple of rag-headed copy-writers prepared a market strategy. It would of course be monstrous to suggest that anyone involved in this report had ever put anything more interesting than sniff up his nose, but it was a ludicrous irony to see members of one of the professions supposedly associated with cocaine abuse straight-facedly discussing the target group for their putative product.

As to the moral question of Press responsibility (or lack of it) in promoting an unhealthy response through sensationalism, it scarcely behoves us to wax pious about the media when they habitually expend so much energy in the pursuit of indirect advertising, otherwise known as "hype". Perhaps the most valuable information presented here was the oblique insight into this grey area.

Black and white were the dominant colours of *Drama Along Balmoral Drive* (BBC2). Douglas Livingstone's play about the after-effects of majority rule in Zimbabwe conjured up a beleaguered outpost of Empire where the supplies of fish-paste had run out and the native white engineer had to make do with monochrome television while his new black boss enjoyed a colour set.

The play's framing device was awkward (and possibly redundant) and the implied personal tragedy never achieved lift-off, but Colin Blakely and Rowena Cooper graced their wincing acceptance of their new position with some excellent lesson-chewing smiles.

Martin Cropper

Summerscope Brathwaite/ Johnson Purcell Room

The haunting cry, high up in the head of "Strawberry", and the languid lullaby of "Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess*, were encores which understandably brought the house down in Maureen Brathwaite's recital on Tuesday night. For those who had seen her at Glyndebourne, the songs record the electricity of her stage presence in the production there. For everyone in the audience, they set the seal on the bright-eyed generosity and spontaneous warmth which had characterized her recital.

So direct and distinctive is her mode of communication, so vigorous and tireless her wide-ranging soprano, that her programme, called "I Have a Dream", could have spoken most potently for itself. Graham Johnson, however, was her accompanist. Taking as a starting-point the quirk of colonial history that caused him, as a white, to be born in Southern Africa and she, as a black, to be born in South London, he provided a Songmakers-style commentary to the entire evening, with characteristic cunning of matter and contrivance of manner.

We learnt much about the indignities suffered by Lena Horne and Marian Anderson, about Wilhelm Grosz, Walter de la Mare and his "Zwölf kleine Negerlein", and of the reforming zeal of Coleridge-Taylor. But the music itself taught us still more, the simplicity of Charles Ives's arrangement of "In the Morning Give Me Jesus"; the money-spinning gaiety of Irving Berlin's "He's a Rag Picker"; and the verbal and rhythmic energy of Montsalvage's *Canciones Negras*.

This was the repertoire in which Miss Brathwaite excelled. Milhaud's *Chansons de nègres* needed just more control of nuance and inflection than her voice, at times ill-focused when constrained to impose on her heavy vibrato, is as yet able to give.

Hilary Finch

Theatre: the Avignon Festival Massive clouds of verbosity

Forty festivals on, Avignon has grown from a modest arts week with two theatrical venues into a four-week event with 30 productions in 20 different places, a budget of £2 million and a thriving fringe of some 300 shows. But this creative cornucopia throws into high relief France's current dramatic dilemma. No one seems to be writing plays for the French theatre: any more. This year's festival is dominated by adaptations of foreign works and performances whose actionless verbosity is better heard than seen.

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* opened the festival. A complacent new production directed by Alfredo Arias with Pierre Dux as Prospero and Jean-Louis Curtis as Ariel, it is saved by the open-air magic of the Cour d'Honneur of the Palais des Papes. Roberto Platte's set cleverly re-creates a fragment of the Cour's splendid architecture and places it on a sandy island surrounded by wind-rippled water. Clotilde Mollet is a delightfully ethereal Ariel who, by a well-timed use of doubles, contrives to be in three places at once. Remarkable as much for her physical metamorphosis as for her primeval ape-like interpretation is Mariela Marini as Caliban.

The main aim of Avignon is, however, to stimulate new French dramatic works and provide a lively trying ground for public-funded productions, destined for Paris and other state-subsidized theatres around France. *Le Malheur* (indifferent and *L'Enfant* are due to go to one of the capital's quasi-fringe theatres. Both pieces are gleaned from the writings of Peter Handke and directed by Jeanne Champagne. *Le Malheur* is a shared monologue between mother and

son, laying bare the reasons for the former's suicide. *Enfant* is a straight monologue dissecting the transition from being just a man to becoming a father. The admirable performers do their utmost to put flesh on what are basically two excellent radio plays, but not theatre.

There is no shortage of text in the three-hour *Le Drame de la vie* premieres scenes, written, directed and designed by Valère Novarina. Here, the surfeit of words is matched by incessant movement. It is to be regretted there is no apparent correlation between the two; perhaps the promised *Deuxième Scènes* will bring cohesion.

A new production of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Venise* — sawie again has more than ample verbal content. This drifts sporadically out through an unifying, realistic mist which obscures the audience, the actors, André Engel's direction and, one is told, Nicky Rieti's unforgettable set.

The new production of Schiller's *Don Carlos* is visible enough, but the nauseous green décor would greatly benefit from several shrouds of mist. The cast, headed by Marthe Keller and Gerard Desbarres, deserves praise. Michelle Marquis's direction, however, requires considerable honing before the piece opens in Paris this autumn.

Around a dozen writers were invited by the festival to create a short work around the theme Oser l'Amour (*Dare to Love*). Some failed to meet the deadline, others were rejected, either by the performing company, the Théâtre Ouvert, or the chosen director, Jeanne Labrunie. Played in the Hospice Saint-Louis, one of the festival's new open-air venues, with its intimate, crumbling architectural backdrop,



The open-air magic of the Cour d'Honneur of the Palais des Papes redeeming an otherwise indifferent *Tempest*

sheltered by rustling plane trees, the five remaining pieces — given over two evenings — would make an interesting collection of short stories, or even a radio series. They are not visual theatre, however.

Despite this dearth of the real thing and an unusually aggressive French Press, there is hardly a seat to be had for any of the productions for what has come to be known as the "in". Hordes of hopefuls nightly turn up at all the venues waiting for returns. The "off" does not yet have this powerful charisma. Tolerated by the "in" when the first young companies began infiltrating the festival in the middle Sixties — playing in everything from boulangeries to back

gardens — the "off" has steadily gained ground. Since 1982 it has become legitimate, and today it has successfully shed its café theatre image to emerge as a true fringe theatre, a term which is still to find its way into the French language.

Unlike the "in", where short runs are the norm — sometimes for only a handful of performances — "off" productions as often as not play through the festival. Daily, the town wades through waves of publicity hand-outs for this year's record number of shows, which like the "in" includes music, dance and cinema. Success in the "off", however, has very little to do with hand-outs: it depends on word of mouth.

Taking part in the "off" is an expensive affair: companies must pay their own way, even if the money mostly comes out of a grant. Consequently they play safe with a 50-seat venue, only to find themselves squeezing in 70 and turning away 100. Fortunately, Avignon has a higher-than-average number of 100- to 200-seat permanent theatres, who share their stages with visiting companies. Most shows last around an hour and, with good timing, a detailed street map, plenty of stamina and at least £25 a day to spend on tickets, it is possible to take in up to five events daily.

One of the most outstanding "off" productions is *La Barque*,

written and directed by Gérard Gelas and performed by his Avignon-based company Chêne Noir. Technically superior to many a major Paris production — water flows and fire leaps across the stage — the piece recounts the activities of an agency who, in exchange for all your worldly goods, arranges your suicide in circumstances of your choosing. The suicidal client in *La Barque* chooses a weekend on a mythical boat. Stunning, surrealistic sets, Pinteresque dialogue and two finely worked performances from Nicole Aublat and Jean-Marc Avocat combine to intrigue, disturb and entertain.

Diane Hill

Promenade Concert Slow to gather momentum

English Concert/
Pinnock
Albert Hall/Radio 3

Handel's *Solomon*, masterpiece though it is, is a work for which contemporary sensibilities must make adjustment, as they must for any baroque oratorio. Its drama is, to say the least, both slowly paced and simple, as well as being chopped into three unrelated episodes. But that is not the point. For Handel paints his characters and situations with painstaking exactitude, so that our pleasure — and there is an infinite amount to be had — derives not from dramatic continuity but from a series of static views. The only exception is the scene depicting the dispute of the Harlots and Solomon's judgement.

Even so, Trevor Pinnock's performance, with the choir and orchestra of the English Concert and an array of singers whose voices were conspicuously on the large side for a period-style interpretation, began a mite slug-

gishly. The dominant emotion of Act I may be amoros, and the sequence of arias towards the end of the act is undoubtedly something to linger over to a degree, but Pinnock here went to extremes, thus rather over-exaggerating the pastoral element.

He made ample amends thereafter, however, generating the rhythmic crispness we are accustomed to in his music-making. Perhaps that initial problem may have been down to Pinnock bowing to the work's Utopian vision and allowing his singers their full say in matters of pace. Certainly individually they were able to produce the most convincing results, with the unhappy exception of Ian Caley who as Zadok sang rather messily, often under the note, and with distinct awkwardness in matters of line and tone.

That distraction should not be allowed to cloud the immense achievement of Felicity Palmer in the title role. Majestic as a king, humble as a devout and grateful servant of God, chivalrous and delicately sensual as a lover, she had the

measure of every subtle emotion contained in her plentiful contributions.

The other star — present, alas, only in the third act — was Arleen Auger as the Queen of Sheba, whose aria "Will the sun forget to streak?" deliciously accompanied by gently throbbing strings with oboe and flute providing a simple but effective unison obbligato, was at once wondrously serene and noble.

Of the supporting roles, Jennifer Smith, though sometimes idiosyncratic in technique, was touching as the First Harlot, while Della Jones was aptly impetuous as the Second. Marie McLaughlin, Solomon's Queen, sang with perhaps too assertive a manner, though her Act I duet with her king was ravishing. Stephen Roberts richly turned the role of the Levite into one of real significance. There was good excellent work from the choir, too, who themselves had some miraculous material to relish, not least the magnificent closing chorus.

Stephen Pettitt

Dance The Golden Age Covent Garden

Two more of the Bolshoi Ballet's leading men have followed Irak Mukhamedov into the leading role of *The Golden Age*, and it has to be said that neither of them has even attempted most of the trick steps with which he decorates solos. Without them, it becomes more conventional, although still conceived and danced on a boldly heroic scale.

Yuri Vasyuchenko is the more experienced and the more successful. Andris Liepa, making his first attempt at the role on Tuesday, lacks nothing in daring, but Vasyuchenko conveys more of the sense of purpose in the young patriot fighting gangsters. They both had the benefit of Alla Mikhailchenko as the slightly ambiguous heroine Rita, full of fine thoughts but apparently whole-hearted in her employment as a showgirl in a seedy club. With her extraordinarily long legs, radiant face and flexible, slender physique, she conveys in both sides of the character.

The other leading part for a woman, the gangster's moll, looks a sure-fire hit, with Maria Bylova perhaps the most perky interpreter of its three interpreters but not a lot to choose between them. As the gangster, Vitaly Artyushkin has the more impressive appearance, Alexei Lazarev the sharper, more arrogant manner, but neither gives the part quite the dominant edge I imagine was intended.

In addition to the considerable demands it makes on its leading dancers, *The Golden Age* is remarkable for the enormous cast it deploys, at least 80 or 90 performers. There is no ballet company in Britain that could put out such a cast, in quality as well as quantity. True, some of them are not asked to do much more than swarm over or round the stage waving banners, or to strike voluptuously decadent attitudes during a tango. But among them are quite a few who exult in great forceful leaps, building a crescendo of movement up to the climactic moment when the principals burst triumphantly upon the scene.

Andrei Buravtsev and Mikhail Tsivin, as the leaders of Boris's followers, maintain a buoyant energy through innumerable entries that have them leaping, revolving and cartwheeling with a bravura that could sustain major roles but is here almost a throw-away among the crowd effects.

I must mention particularly Mikhail Tsivin, the master of ceremonies at the night-club. The role carries more than a whiff of Joel Grey's performance in *Cabaret*, but it avoids the effete quality that clings to most imitations.

My apologies for two errors caused by the hazards of telephonic communication in my notice yesterday. *Raymonda* has many solos, not mini-solos, and Gelsey Kirkland, although an older dancer than Trinidad Savillano, is by no means an old dancer.

John Percival



Persuasive anti-hero, dashing burlesque: Brian Deacon (left), Philip Bowen

Theatre in London The wisdom for enjoyment

Arms and the
Man
Regent's Park

Shaw's first comedy is a surprisingly short piece that whirrs past, despite its two intervals, in little more than a couple of hours. Never again did he manage to convey wisdom so enjoyably. And in Bulgaria, of all places.

This altogether admirable anti-hero, played with persua-

sive charm by Brian Deacon, bursts into a household where the ideas of the servants may be practical enough but those of their employers are a muddle of misty idealism and self-doubt. It is perceptive to give, quite early on, both to Raina, the girl who shelters Bluntschli, and to her magnificently absurd fiancé Sergius, their moments of uncertainty. Are they as heroic as they think they are? Can noble illusions be enough? No difficulty guessing the answers these questions get.

For an open-air production it is unhelpful that the night-time scene is placed at the start of the evening, when (weather permitting) the mackerel sky above is still white against pale blue. But at least we see Bulgarian soldiers chase their fugitive round the audience before he clambers into Raina's bedroom. Simon Hight's sets are backed with simply worked wooden posts

and patterned rugs; while it is a pity not to have the last act set in Bulgaria's joke attempt at a library, the loss is not a great one.

David Conville's direction encourages Philip Bowen to carry the dashing Sergius almost over into burlesque. I suppose this is all right when the squawky heroics the part satirizes have long since vanished from the theatre. Learning over backwards in elegance, his constant search for objects to place one foot upon reaches its comic climax when he thrusts his foot on to the fragile seat of a cane chair. Sarah Woodward manages most of the veering moods of Raina neatly, better at suggesting genuine love than bogus adoration. But Sue Hodge's sparkly little maid substitutes pertness for the required defiance of an underdog on the way up.

Jeremy Kingston

Stitch/ The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant Almeida

"Not The RSC Again!" the posters trumpet or, possibly, groan. For the second year running, the Barbican company has taken over the Almeida for a fortnight's summer camp on a shoestring.

Tuesday night's bill of fare offered the basic mix of home-grown drama and theatrical rarities. *Stitch* — receiving here (we are rather grandly informed) its London premiere — is a cumbersome and mostly obtuse account of a day in the rag trade, written by Arnold Yarrow. It is odd that a professional actor should

take half an hour to introduce his characters, and odder yet that this should be done (by Graham Turner) in the manner of a dramatized CSE lesson on the black economy. In a basement sweatshop, Muslim, Hindu and West Indian women are sewing for 30p a garment. Their penny-pinching Cypriot boss (Mr Yarrow himself) tries to cut their piece-rate in response to cheap imports from Bangkok; the workers take over, raise a banner and sing the "Internationale"; finally, most of them perish in a fire caused by faulty electrics.

There are agreeable performances from Penny Rider as a chirpy cockney and from Tom Mannion as an obstreperous presser (a marvellous impersonation of slack-mouthed stupidity), but the play's polemical intent is overt, lead-

edly predictable and risible. This is anyway the wrong audience to urge not to buy cheap clothes on market stalls; they would probably feel more at home in the creations of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's designer heroine Petra von Kant.

The play from which the celebrated film was adapted has been given once before in London, in 1976; here, a sterling company of six performed it from the translation of Anthony Vivas. Watching actors on the book is a novel experience and did not detract from this curiously arid expose of sexual politics. Kristin Milward makes an impressively feline Petra and gets able support from Tina Marian as the spoilt protégée who breaks her heart.

Martin Cropper

PAINTING IN SCOTLAND • The Golden Age

Duncan MacMillan

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THE ART OF THE BOOK

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

TEMPUS

Young Turks lead the hunt for ready assets

buy themselves an investment portfolio, thereby transforming themselves into the very type of company they are so avidly stalking.

The answer must lie in the fact that trading companies continually have to run faster to maintain growth, with the attendant problems of raising finance and finding developments in an increasingly competitive world.

And they often keep only a small share of their development profits. Buying ready-made assets gives them a base on which to borrow money, allowing them to keep a greater share of their developments. The attraction is that schemes do not have to be pre-funded or sold, which necessitates giving an institution the lion's share of the proceeds in return.

This is certainly the reasoning behind Greycoar's wish to buy Property Holding and Investment Trust, a battle which is becoming increasingly acrimonious as time goes

Mountleigh, on the other hand, will only make an offer for United Real if terms can be agreed. And Mountleigh says it wants United Real for the development potential within its portfolio. Either way the investment companies are unlikely to be able to resist their predators once the price is right.

Judith Huntley

COMPANY NEWS

● **DELTA GOLD:** Shareholders have approved the acquisition of the mineral interests of Canyon Resources. The purchase is being made by the issue of 16,075,570 Delta shares to Canyon, raising Delta's capitalization to \$13 million, of which Canyon will own 46 per cent.

● **TEMPLETON GALBRAITH AND HANSBERGER:** Net assets at July 31 on the Templeton mutual funds were (figs \$ million): Templeton Growth Fund 1,704 (1,166), World Fund 3,054 (2,279), Foreign Fund 175 (93), Global i Fund 303 (268), Global ii Fund 498 (290).

● **ELSWICK HOPPER:** The results for the first half of the year are likely to be below management's hopes, due to

management's hopes due to poor market conditions in the first quarter, especially in the agricultural machinery sector. Group sales improved considerably in the second quarter.

3p (7.1p) 130,000oz of gold a year.

BASE LENDING RATES

ABN	10.00%
Adam & Company	10.00%
BCCI	10.00%
Citicbank Savings	10.75%
Consolidated Grds	10.00%
Continental Trust	10.00%
Co-operative Bank	10.00%
C. Hoare & Co	10.00%
Hong Kong & Shanghai	10.00%
Lloyds Bank	10.00%
Nat Westminster	10.00%
Royal Bank of Scotland	10.00%
TSB	10.00%
Citicbank NA	10.00%

† Mortgage Base Rate

APPOINTMENTS

MARKING NAMES: Dividends payable in Canada and in the United States on or before July 23 and up to and including July 29 are valued at 46.09p per Canadian dollar and 64.86p per U.S. dollar.

**INDEPENDENT NEWS-
PAPERS:** The dividend for the
six months to June 30 is 4p
(3.3p). With figures in IR£000,
trading profit was 3,558 (3,010),
depreciation 807 (772), pretax
profit 2,751 (2,238), tax 616
(581) and earnings per share

East European Trade Council (EETC): Lord Jellicoe has been named as chairman, succeeding Lord Shackleton who is to become honorary president.

Communication is not simply
sending a message...it is
creating true understanding—swiftly,
clearly and precisely.

"I know he's trying to tell me something: but what does he really mean?" In our world of proliferating technologies and new terminology, this kind of question is asked a lot. Here is what we are doing about it.

Hitachi's scientists and technicians' long-term goal is to break the language barrier. They are diligently at work today on an array of projects that will vastly improve the communications of tomorrow.

For example, we've made tremendous progress on a system to translate Japanese into English...

This system can be used to translate various scientific/technical papers and machinery/equipment manuals. Special "glossaries" can be developed to adapt it for fields as diverse as medicine, electronics and aeronautics. Further development could lead to automatic telephone translation or even portable verbal translators for travelers.

In addition to the machine translation system, Hitachi's research specialists are also developing advanced transmission systems that send your phone calls or business data across great distances using hair-thin optical fibers and laser beams.

They are also working on other new methods of communications, such as advanced telephone exchange systems, satellite communication systems, TV conferences, and so forth.

At the root of much of this is our highly advanced computer technology: because Hitachi is producing some of the fastest, largest-capacity systems available today.

We link technology to human needs. We believe that Hitachi's advanced technologies will result in systems and products that are functionally sophisticated but easy to use. Our goal in communications—and transportation, energy and consumer electronics as well—is to build products and systems that will improve the quality of life the world around.



HITACHI

STOCK MARKET REPORT

Equities lose almost £4bn after GKN profits warning

By Michael Clark

Share prices went into a nosedive yesterday, suffering their biggest-ever one-day fall following a profits warning from GKN, Keen & Nettelfolds, one of Britain's biggest manufacturing companies.

Almost £4 billion was wiped from the value of quoted shares as the FT 100 fell 100 points, its lowest since 1974. The index closed at 1,425.9, down from 1,525.9 the previous day.

The broad-based FT-SE 100 also closed sharply lower on the day, with a fall of 21.2 points to 1,540.4. The market has been in a highly nervous state and the interim figures from GKN proved all too much for investors. Pretax profits were up from £70.5 million to £74.5 million, but Mr Trevor Holdsworth, the chairman, warned that the full-year profits were likely to fall short of last year's £133 million.

The share price responded accordingly, tumbling 58p to 118p. The company's shares were down 10p to 118p, while the FT 100 fell 100 points to 1,425.9. The market has been in a highly nervous state and the interim figures from GKN proved all too much for investors. Pretax profits were up from £70.5 million to £74.5 million, but Mr Trevor Holdsworth, the chairman, warned that the full-year profits were likely to fall short of last year's £133 million.

288p and wiping more than £133 million from its stock market capitalization. The effect on the other big industrials was predictable. Hawker Siddeley fell by 26p to 491p and Lucas Industries by 14p to 516p. TI Group, with interim figures expected later today, was down by 10p to 495p. Analysts are expecting pretax profits to rise by £1.5 million to £20 million. Evered Holdings, which has just lost its battle for control of McKee Bros, continues to speak for about 20 per cent of the shares.

Sentiment in the market was also hit by confirmation of a large placing of shares by Boots, the highest street chemist, the share price of which dipped by another 9p to 213p. The group is paying £375 million for Flint Laboratories, a subsidiary of Baxter Travenol. To help finance the deal, Rowe & Pitman, the broker, was asked to place 184 million shares at 205p. It did — but it turned out to be quite a struggle.

The Government's decision to block GEC's £1,900 million bid for Plessey also did little to help confidence. Plessey fell 8p to 198p, while GEC slipped 6p to 190p. Dealers had already convinced themselves

that the bid would be blocked, but, nevertheless, had relished the prospect of all that extra cash flooding back into the market from GEC's huge cash mountain.

With so much bad news around, the marketmakers were having a poor time of it as they continued to mark share prices sharply lower. But there were a few signs of blue creeping in towards the close and some dealers took the view that the fall had been overdone. Nevertheless, the outlook remains bleak.

Gifts were also in retreat, following Tuesday's disappointing money supply figures which have again delayed the prospect of another cut in interest rates. Prices at the far end of the market were 1/2 down at the close. The insurance companies were in a spin and continued to lose ground throughout the day. Marketmen fear that the heavy flooding in Australia could result in big payouts for the insurers once the real extent of the damage is assessed. There is also talk that a bearish broker's circular is on the way.

Commercial Union fell 8p to 293p, General Accident 23p to 293p, Guardian Royal Exchange 35p to 804p, Royal

Insurance 25p to 799p, London United Investments 3p to 205p and Sun Alliance 25p to 662p.

The insurance brokers also suffered a mark-down with CE Heath 5p lighter at 503p, Miner Holdings 4p at 247p, Hogg Robinson 3p at 307p, Sedgwick Group 2p at 358p, Stewart Warrington 3p at 434p and Willis Faber 2p at 407p.

But the clearing banks spent a quiet session ahead of the interim figures later today from Barclays, the last of the big four to report. Analysts are still expecting Barclays to weigh in with pretax profits of £460 million for the first six months, compared with £410 million last time. Barclays edged 10p to 474p, as National Westminster eased 5p to 502p, Midland firmed 2p to 549p, while Lloyds was unchanged at 387p.

The merchant banks presented a steadier picture, although some prices were off their best at the close. There were gains of 2p in Henry Ansbacher at 72p, Geddes Peat at 79p and Hill Samuel at 355p, while Kleinwort Benson rose 1p to 730p and Mercury International a similar amount to 658p. But recent newcomer Morgan Grenfell

was again left out in the cold, closing all-square at 438p.

This compares with the original striking price of 500p and means that those investors who were in there at the start are now sitting on a loss of 62p a share.

Brewery shares were again a flat market after Tuesday's attempt at a rally. The proposed Monopolies Commission inquiry into the tied house system for pubs still weighs heavily on the market. Among the leaders, Allied-Lyons fell 4p to 316p, Bass 7p to 738p, Grand Metropolitan, the Watney and Truman group, 8p to 388p, Greenall Whitley 4p to 176p, Greene King 3p to 215p, Scottish & Newcastle 2p to 186p and Whitbread "A" 6p to 254p.

Oil shares ran into profit-taking after Thursday's exceptional performance which saw double-figure gains among most of the big producers. However, prices were able to close above their worst levels of the day. The agreement reached by Opec oil ministers in Geneva to restrict production during September and October to 16 million barrels a day was, at first, well received in the City.

The autumn is traditionally the time of year when most distributors start to stock up for the winter and it was hoped that this, combined with less oil slopping about on world markets, would breathe new life into the oil price. But many analysts are now of the opinion that the measures could just prove to be a stopgap.

As a result, British 3p at 118p, Barmah 3p at 377p, Enterprise Oil 4p at 117p, London & Scottish Marine Oil 2p to 111p, Petrocontrol 3p to 58p and Ultramar 5p to 156p.

COMMENT Kenneth Fleet

Double-edged blow for Weinstock

Whatever the merits of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's majority finding against GEC — and some of them are dubious (bully for Mr Baillieu) — it is a major practical and psychological blow for GEC, matched only by the elation of Plessey, which has been saved from Lord Weinstock's clutches by the persuasive powers of the Ministry of Defence and a revitalized, determined and unusually subtle Plessey board.

Though Paul Channon, the Secretary of State, has accepted the majority judgment, the Department of Trade and Industry must be dismayed by the block put on the restructuring of a vital industry.

There is one avenue left open for GEC and Plessey to explore — the "but" in the Commission's "No, but Minister" judgment — namely "some suitable rationalization of System X." This the Commission is content to leave to the mutual interest of the two companies to bring about. It will surely need more than that and the Government, if it is serious about the future of the telecommunications supply industry, will have to address itself to the problems.

The point is made by what the companies had to say yesterday. The word from Plessey was: "We shall continue to run our profitable and successful System X business. In the longer term we have made it clear we would like to combine our and GEC's System X interests. That remains our ambition."

By buying GEC's interests? "We would be happy to take over GEC's System X interests, if the price is right. But that depends on GEC. In the meantime, we have a separate and profitable business."

A joint venture? "We have been trying to get an agreement on System X since 1982. We shall continue to pursue a sensible agreement which must reflect Plessey's leadership of System X development."

But a sale to GEC? "We are the leader and need to have this reflected in any arrangement on System X in the future."

At GEC Jim Prior, the chairman, said GEC could do no more than show its willingness to buy the Plessey public switching interests if terms could be agreed. GEC accepts negotiations between the two companies will have to be re-started, a joint venture still being an option.

The "no" leaves GEC in a difficult situation where dismay at the latest turn of events might degenerate into defeatism. With one or two exceptions — telecommunications clearly and perhaps office systems — GEC is essentially a large, mature business in which rapid growth is not easy to achieve.

GEC's enviable financial performance is the result of Lord Weinstock's determination to follow one guiding star: performance measured by earnings per share. But his critics, many and variously motivated, have been quick to point out the two main pillars of GEC's earnings record: highly profitable, cost-plus defence contracts and high yields from the company's enormous financial reserves. As Sir John Clark would often say: "I am a manager, Arnold is a banker."

With interest and inflation rates declining and the age of cost-plus work coming rapidly to an end, GEC needs to travel in a new direction. The company, and Lord Weinstock in particular, also badly need a major success.

Ideas and schemes have not been lacking: the AEG initiative, merging with British Aerospace and the bid for Plessey are cases in point. But for various reasons, of which lack of sufficient determination or follow-through has undoubtedly been one, GEC has not made the quantum leap.

At the same time, problems of succession and a conspicuous lack of political nous have brought clouds of grey around Stanhope Gate. Though Mrs Thatcher and Lord Weinstock like and admire each other, their dialogues have become no more than competing monologues. GEC's failures with Nimrod have not been counter-balanced in the eyes of senior politicians and civil servants by its successes with torpedoes, and GEC's alignment with the Europeans in the Westland affair did not go unnoticed.

The pressure is now on GEC to take new initiatives. It will be unfortunate for British manufacturing if Lord Weinstock is persuaded that the best course is to become an industrial conglomerate.

As for Plessey, this week's Westinghouse deal might well prove only the first of such cooperative ventures, particularly involving American interests.

RECENT ISSUES

Company	Price	Change
Anglia Secs (115p)	101	-1
Angley (115p)	101	-1
BBS Design (6p)	60	-1
Beaverbrook (45p)	150	-1
Borland (125p)	125	-1
Chelston Man (125p)	125	-1
Coated Electronics (84p)	113	-1
Coline (110p)	113	-1
Essex Holdings (120p)	117	-1
Faraday Denys (70p)	74	+1
GT Management (210p)	210	-1
Guthrie Corp (150p)	150	-1
Hill Ergonomics (82p)	82	-1

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

STERLING SPOT	
Market closes day's range August 5	Market closes day's range August 5
1.4770-1.4898	1.4770-1.4
2.0425-2.0525	2.0425-2
3.4809-3.4831	3.4834-3.4
63.55-64.01	63.55-63.7
1.4863-1.5022	1.4863-1.5
1.0391-1.0398	1.0391-1.0
0.4726-0.5008	0.5075-0.5
215.86-216.00	215.86-21
198.52-200.22	198.52-19
210.91-212.52	210.91-21
10.8864-10.9534	10.8864-11
9.9891-9.9925	9.9891-9.9
10.2682-10.3006	10.2682-10
327.83-329.42	327.83-32

[illegible]

STMENT TRUSTS

FINANCIAL TRUSTS

Portfolio Gold

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No.	Company	Code	Gold share
1	English China Clay	Industrials E-K	
2	Robinson (Thomas)	Industrials L-R	
3	Paragon	Oil	
4	Brenner	Drugs, Stores	
5	House Of Lords	Drugs, Stores	
6	Pylis	Chemicals, Plastics	
7	Hambros	Bank, Discount	
8	Macklow (A&I)	Property	
9	Black (A&I)	Newspapers, Pub	
10	Brumby	Food, Farm, Adv	
11	New London Oil	Oil	
12	IBL	Electricals	
13	Broken Hill	Industrials A-D	
14	Rockware	Industrials L-R	
15	Harline Mash	Industrials E-K	
16	Haichan Whampoa	Industrials L-R	
17	Westwood	Industrials S-Z	
18	Lan Midland	Industrials L-R	
19	Wiggins	Building, Roads	
20	East Lighting	Electricals	
21	Hilldown Ridge	Food	
22	Atlantic Comp.	Electricals	
23	Ampol	Oil	
24	Country & New	Property	
25	Peckham-Henry	Industrials L-R	
26	General Motor	Motor, Aircraft	
27	Cowie (T)	Industrials E-K	
28	Powell Duffryn	Industrials L-R	
29	Jerome (S)	Textiles	
30	S & U Stores	Drugs, Stores	
31	Transcontinental	Industrials S-Z	
32	Acton New Z	Bank, Discount	
33	Dunhill	Drugs, Stores	
34	Watts Blake	Building, Roads	
35	Rockhild (J) Ltd	Bank, Discount	
36	Barr & W.A. A	Leisure	
37	Costume	Industrials A-D	
38	Steeley	Industrials S-Z	
39	Thomson T-Line	Industrials L-R	
40	Wolstenholme Rink	Chemicals, Plastics	
41	Ford Motor	Motor, Aircraft	
42	Laing Prop	Property	
43	Hill & Hill	Building, Roads	

Please be sure to take account of any minor signs

Weekly Dividend						
Please make a note of your daily totals for the weekly dividend of £16,000 in Saturday's newspaper.						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Total

BRITISH FUNDS			
1986	High	Low	Price

SHORTS (Under Five Years)			
1986	High	Low	Price

FIVE TO FIFTEEN YEARS			
1986	High	Low	Price

OVER FIFTEEN YEARS			
1986	High	Low	Price

UNDATED			
1986	High	Low	Price

INDEX-LINKED			
1986	High	Low	Price

BANKS DISCOUNT HP			
1986	High	Low	Price

ELECTRICALS			
1986	High	Low	Price

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

Heavy selling

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began July 28. Dealings end tomorrow. Contango day next Monday. Settlement day August 18. Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days.

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

BREWERIES							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

BUILDINGS AND ROADS							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

FINANCE AND LAND							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

FOODS							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

HOTELS AND CATERERS							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

INDUSTRIALS A-D							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

INDUSTRIALS E-K							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

INDUSTRIALS L-R							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

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1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

Portfolio Gold

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1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

OVERSEAS TRADERS							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

PAPER, PRINTING, ADVERT							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

PROPERTY							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

MINING							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

SHIPPING							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

SHOES AND LEATHER							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

TEXTILES							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

TOBACCO							
1986	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E

GENERAL APPOINTMENTS

August 7, 1986

As a frequent visitor to the UK during the past 15 years, and an interested observer of management trends, I have been surprised by an apparent contradiction. British attitudes to human resource management have improved dramatically, yet at the same time the practice of staff recruitment and retention does not seem to have kept pace.

There seems to exist what I can only describe as an air of resignation. Many managers responsible for selection and recruitment are too prepared to settle for "the best of the batch" rather than "the best" and in consequence add less value to their business than if they set their sights higher.

What this appears to mean in practice in Britain is that the agency recruitment process throws up, say, a dozen highly screened candidates, several are interviewed and, to save going through the whole time-consuming, expensive procedure again, the best of the batch is chosen.

This is an expedient rather than, as it should be, a calculated, long-term investment decision, and it has negative knock-on effects. One of these is that people who apply for a position tend to do so speculatively rather than in the expectation that they will match a precise requirement. From my own and colleagues' observations, they are not fully confident that the eventual selection decision will be made for totally the right

reason. This does not encourage them to be Number One; they set their sights on being hopelessly good enough rather than best.

The net effect of achieving a selection rather than necessarily the right selection is to perpetuate what British managers are frequently accused of — management by not making mistakes. They are judged on action rather than the consequences of action.

Although it may be a notion of declining favour in a political sense in this country, it is my experience that management by conviction is what differentiates the successful from the average and that human resource management is as critical as financial management in ensuring that good business results are achieved.

Having been through a similar process ourselves, we in Australia are watching with interest how the UK will respond to the challenge of the Big Bang. A clear side effect will be the impact on staff movement. This point is illustrated by just one thing that happened to us. As a result of the liberalization, the number of banks in Australia increased from five to 20 and this has created an acute shortage not only of banking staff but also of computer staff. The same thing will inevitably happen here and, of course, on a much larger scale.

Skills and management shortages lead firms to become much more inventive in procuring the

British business often fails in the selection process and the effect is a negative one, says Geoff Slade

people they want. We have begun to experience the "golden hello" phenomenon in Australia much as you are experiencing it here.

What is even more destabilizing is the growing trend to recruit whole teams. Whereas taking individuals from your competitors has always been an irritant, taking teams of key players can, at a stroke, push them out of business. This is particularly true in service companies where staff and their skills represent the principal, tangible assets.

In the case of a systems and software company, for example, the asset value of their product is relatively low. Their revenue comes from time charges and does not contribute to building a solid, re-sellable asset base. Even with a software products (as compared to software design) company, the recoverable asset in the case of business failure is low. Companies



such as these are particularly vulnerable to losing teams and must attend very closely to staff motivation, career development and rewards.

What all this boils down to is that in the management and skills area supply is simply not capable of matching demand and in this respect neither we in Australia nor you in Britain are yet doing enough to put this right.

It is not just the shortage of places at universities and colleges but the educational infrastructure which fails to provide adequate career counselling and information, particularly in the sphere of information technology. We need more people in IT and yet there are insufficient knowledgeable resources within the educational system to match the needs being generated by commerce and industry. And it will remain so while there is inadequate commitment

to educate the educators. The revolution in information technology and particularly in communications has changed the way business operates, creating new and different pressures and an infinitely more complex commercial environment in which people must interact. One positive step to improve the understanding in schools and colleges would be to second teachers into the business world for at least one-year periods to experience the management, motivational and role play issues first hand.

This has been said before but, as I understand, not yet practised to any extent in this country. Obviously there are organizational problems to be overcome but this could be further assisted by secondment from industry to education, provided appropriate financial reconciliation were made.

However, to return to what I consider to be a primary concern in the human resources business, I observe in the UK, as in Australia, personnel selection consultants being discredited by the large number of small unqualified practices who are sometimes little more than curriculum vitae brokers. It is my contention that client companies should demand much more. The business is primarily about accurate analysis of need, speed and response, and confidence in obtaining the best result.

When I started nearly 20 years

ago the going rate for selection was 2 per cent of the first year's salary, or, to put it more dramatically, about one week's earnings. Most consultants at the top now charge 18 to 21 per cent for advertised selection and considerably more for executive search. This increase has nothing to do with opportunities or market forces but the level of service provided.

Before seeking appropriate candidates a consultancy must first thoroughly understand the client company and position requirement. It should then present to the client only those people who will fit the specification, having interviewed and filtered out the inappropriate candidates whom the client company would otherwise have had to handle itself.

In my book, the client should be contacted at least twice a week with progress updates and I would expect a three to four weeks' turnaround to be a legitimate expectation for advertised selection. A very good test of a consultancy's worth would be the extent to which it was prepared to guarantee results. If you are confident in your vetting ability and have properly matched the candidate to the position, then he or she will not walk out after a few weeks and it is therefore worth underwriting that expectation.

Many people ask about career

opportunities in Australia and indeed, despite some tightening-up of immigration policy, these still exist, particularly in the accountancy and data processing professions.

The test for success is relatively simple. If you have a good record as an achiever in the UK you will probably succeed in Australia, and indeed your British qualifications could ultimately prove an excellent passport to high positions. If your achievements are moderate, however, you are far less likely to succeed in what is probably a more aggressive environment.

An increasingly popular way of testing the ground, which the teaching profession has been practising for years, is cross-migration where, say, two years are spent overseas on an exchange basis. Recent research has shown that a high proportion of top achievers have spent some years overseas. It is far more than just a change of scenery and can contribute significantly to the commonwealth of knowledge and experience which makes us all better businessmen and businesswomen.

Geoff Slade is managing director of the Slade Consulting Group, one of Australia's largest executive selection and management consultancies. The company opened a London office last October.

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SPORT

The shadow of Hadlee hangs over England

By John Woodcock, Cricket Correspondent

England start the second Test match against New Zealand at Trent Bridge today and their fifth Test of the summer, under the sponsorship of Cornhill, with no more settled a side than they had for the first. It is little wonder, therefore, that the selectors must be as anxious as the players for a genuinely good performance as a prelude to going to Australia this winter.

When Thomas and Small take the new ball together, assuming they do, they will be the sixteenth different pair to do so since Willis retired from Test cricket in 1984. More than that, only three times before in this century has the England attack been opened by a pair of bowlers playing in their first home Test match.

When last it happened, in 1964, Rumsey and Price were the two and Australia made 636 for eight, declared. Jim Smith and Westwood were more successful at Old Trafford in 1937, New Zealand being beaten, and when Gilligan and Tate made their debuts in England together, at Edgbaston in 1924, they bowled South Africa out for 30.

To be fair to the selectors, today's instance is the result of an injury to Dilley. So often these days does someone have to pull out of a Test match after being chosen that I really do wonder whether the modern cricketer is as durable as

his predecessors. I can understand, when there is so much very fast and dangerous short bowling, that broken bones should be a penny, in spite of all the protective gear that batsmen wear. "It frightens me just to stand at the other end," said a first-class umpire recently.

But I begin to wonder whether bowlers suffer these days from bruised heels and

Today's teams at Trent Bridge

ENGLAND (from): M W Gatting (captain), G A Gooch, M D Moxon, C W J Ashley, D I Gower, P Willey, D R Pringle, J E Embury, P H Edmonds, B N French, J G Thomas and G G Small.
NEW ZEALAND (from): J V Conry (captain), J G Wright, B A Edgar, K R Rutherford, M D Crowe, J J Crowe, R J Hadlee, E J Gray, I D S Smith, J G Bracewell, W Watson and D A Stirling.
Umpires: D J Constant and K E Palmer

sore shins and strained shoulders and stress fractures because of the time they spend doing their gymnastics. If they broke themselves in by bowling, and so using the muscles that matter to them as bowlers, might they be harder? I doubt whether Alec Bedser would have stood up to sending down all the overs he did had he been made to prepare himself as though for a PT display rather than a cricket match. On the other hand, the current West Indians, who are put through all kinds of contortions by their physiotherapist, are fitter than they ever were. It is very puzzling.

Anyway, Dilley's with-

drawal for the second time this season — it is his ankle this time — gives Thomas the chance to show how he is bowling. He and Small will make an interesting comparison, as well as a new partnership, and if the pitch is half as good as for last year's Test match against Australia their stamina will be tested. England's faster bowling then, while Australia were making

339, consisted of Botham, Sidebottom and Allott, Botham becoming sufficiently frustrated by the problems of getting anyone out to throw one of his tantrums.

The Trent Bridge groundsman, Ron Allsopp, probably gets nearer than most to the type of pitch he aims for, and these differ according to the sort of match it is. Having thought that last year's pitch was rather too good, and that the drawn Test on it (1191 runs for 22 wickets) was "the worst match we have staged in many years", he may produce something not quite as easy today. It is certainly not green

though, and it should be full of runs as soon as the weather improves.

But the shadow of Richard Hadlee again hangs over England. He knows every blade of grass on the Trent Bridge square. Since joining Nottinghamshire in 1978 his record there in first-class matches is remarkable. He has taken just under 300 wickets at just over 13 apiece at the rate of one every six overs. If a majority of them have come on pitches fairly unlike this one, he will still feel very much at home. He looked in a class of his own at Lord's, as he is likely to here, whatever the pitch. Unfortunately for New Zealand Chatfield is thought not to be quite fit enough to take his place as Hadlee's partner.

England have won three of the four Test matches they have played against New Zealand at Trent Bridge and drawn the other. On the last two occasions their spinners have had a lot of work to do. In 1983 Nick Cook's figures (and where is he now?) were 82-36-150-9; in 1978 Edmonds's were 48.5-20-65-6. I hope England play both Edmonds and Embury today, though it would be more like them to leave one or the other out. The selectors' statement last Sunday that Willey will definitely play has left them, in fact, with a tricky last-minute choice.



England expects: Gladstone Small looks ahead to his first Test with captain Gatting yesterday

Cowes is tied in a sailor's knot

DAVID MILLER

Cowes Week has got its burgee in a bit of a twist. The most prestigious regatta of the year, with more private money, royal connections and historic privilege than any sport other than horse racing, has run into the traditional dilemma which has confronted the aristocracy over the past century: Must they sell the furniture in order to pay, and keep the servants?

Sponsorship is the dirty name of the word, in the eyes of the Royal Yacht Squadron, and sponsorship has been ruffling the waters of the Solent this week. The irony is that any half-dozen members of the Squadron could rattle their pockets for loose change and come up with the modest £50,000 or so without which, according to Major Peter Sowden, the secretary of Cowes Combined Clubs, Cowes could not continue.

"I don't expect to have to pay for my racing," a Squadron member is alleged to have said recently, notwithstanding his six-figure yacht lifting gently at its mooring. The world, unfortunately, is not what it was, as the Scottish Commonwealth Games organizing committee discovered. The only solution for front-line sport is sponsorship, which is a kind of unseen commercial taxation of the public.

Every single member of the rubber-necking public, with the rain dripping from the hem of indecently brief shorts while the kids holler for another ice cream cone, who telephone home to tell granny they are having a wonderful time, is helping to pay for Cowes. This contribution from me comes to you courtesy of a free telephone from British Telecom, who are providing the Press facilities, afloat and ashore.

In pursuit of the decision makers

The arrangement by the Combined Clubs turns out to have been what is known, when a halyard becomes entangled in an insoluble tangle in the upper rigging during a Force 6, as a "bunch of b—": the main sponsors being Sandhurst, the office equipment company who supply everything from paper to computers... and radio telephones, in competition with BT.

Brian Holmes, Sandhurst's chairman, is at pains to remain on good terms with the Combined Clubs because the £70,000 or so it costs his company, including Wimbledon-style executive entertainment, makes good sense. "It doesn't matter if the man in the street has never heard of us," he says. "What I'm after is the decision makers. Ten per cent of the boats on the Solent never go beyond the Needles, but a large slice of these who matter in British industry are down here."

There is probably as much influence within the royal yacht clubs of the Squadron, Thames, Southampton, London, Corinthian, Southern, Ocean Racing and the Island Sailing Club as there is in the Abbey a couple of weeks back. For eight days, they are almost the captive audience of Sandhurst Cowes Week.

Financial reality must be faced

Holmes was thought by some to be too aggressive in his attitude last year, the first of a deal which is guaranteed and inflation protected for another two years. Holmes, himself a Royal Thames member, denies this. "I've tried so hard to play it their way," he says. "We have no intention of interfering with racing and we're not a sponsor who is going to run away."

Too many of the sponsors who have dabbled with Cowes have been joined to the organization by what is termed a snowball hitch: they have melted away in the face of hitherto traditionalism.

Holmes's advertising banners and anoraks, by no means obtrusive compared with, say, the whisky company who sponsored the last Ryder Cup, may make some Squadron members splutter in their pink gins. If Cowes is to survive, however, as a quintessentially British occasion, the Combined Clubs no less than the Commonwealth Games are going to have to come to terms with financial reality: no take without give.

"Pay up and shut up" is not a slogan which is acceptable to sponsors, who are entitled to a return for their investments. There is not a de Savery born every minute. Besides which, most crewmen are already professional in almost every sense. Yachting has to get its act together.

ARA against move to exclude S Africa

By Jim Railton

The three delegates of the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA) at the International Rowing Federation's (FISA) annual congress in Nottingham a week on Sunday will oppose a motion by the Soviet Union to exclude South Africa from FISA.

The ARA delegates' vote was determined after an informal council meeting in London on Monday and the decision was unanimous. The Soviet Union's motion, which is towards the end of the FISA agenda, was, I understand, discussed fully, frankly and openly. It reflects a feeling among rowers that politics in the sport has no effect on world matters and should be kept in cold storage.

The ARA's delegates are Neil Thomas (president), Ivan Pratt (treasurer) and John Veats (chairman of the ARA executive). The ARA, having held the world championships already in Nottingham in 1975, are now FISA's most important members of FISA and as such have three important votes. In making their decision the ARA councillors appear most determined to keep politics out of rowing and recognize the International Rowing Federa-

tion as being successful in keeping an apolitical stand in the sport reflected by the absence of national flags and anthems at the world championships.

The last time the Soviet Union moved to exclude South Africa from FISA was in Monte Carlo in 1977: the motion was defeated.

South Africa, despite having crews of international standard, does not enter the world championships. There appears to be a gentlemen's agreement on this course of action. If South Africa did, in the prevailing political climate, it is clear that FISA would face a walk-out by most Eastern Bloc countries as well as others.

Yet the South Africans did not make many friends in this country last year when their national eight competed at the British affiliated club, Cantabrigia, in Henley Royal Regatta and won the Thames Challenge Cup. Henley, however, has its own rules and is not governed by FISA, although having a healthy respect for the organization. The president of FISA, Thomi Keller, is, in fact, a Henley steward.

Another course to suit Norman style

Toledo, Ohio (Reuters) —

Greg Norman, winner of the Open over the testing contours of Turnberry last month, believes the course for the United States PGA championship, starting today, presents another demanding challenge that will suit his style.

"This course sets up perfectly for me," the long-hitting Australian said of the 6,982-yard Inverness Club course, which has many difficult par-fours and requires both accuracy and patience. Norman, who played here in the 1979 US Open, said: "I really love the course. It takes a cool player — someone who keeps his head out there."

Tom Kite, fresh from a victory in the Western Open, also complimented the course. "The only way you can make a golf course difficult for today's professional is to have small, fast, undulating greens — and that's just what Inverness has. These greens are so small and

More golf, page 30

fast, you don't need narrow fairways," Kite said, comparing the relatively friendly fairways of Inverness to the narrow landing areas which characterized this year's Open and the US Open.

Ray Floyd, who emerged from a nine-man free-for-all to win the US Open in June, agreed with Kite about the Inverness layout, which was designed by Donald Ross, one of the most respected course architects.

Floyd, winner of two PGA championships, said Inverness was especially challenging because long rough had

GOLF

been allowed to grow around its tiny greens.

"With this calibre of golf course I don't see a new name popping up (as winner)," Floyd said. He has won 20 tournaments in his 20-year career. He predicted the winner would be "a good player who is playing well at this time". One such player is Bob Tway, who has already won three tournaments and is the second leading money-winner on the PGA tour behind Norman. He also did well in the Masters and US Open.

Tway said: "If you hit the greens, you'll have some chances for birdies because the greens are small." If that assessment is accurate, there is one player who stands out as a likely winner — Calvin Peete, who tops the PGA tour in two vital statistics, driving accuracy and greens hit in regulation.

Peete, the winner of two tournaments this year, is fifth on the tour's scoring-average list and sixth on the money list. He also did well in the two other majors he played, tying for tenth in the Masters and 24th in the US Open.

The overseas challengers will be led by Bernhard Langer, of West Germany, who tied for third place in the Open. Seve Ballesteros, of Spain, who has been playing extremely well in Europe, and Tommy Nakajima, of Japan, who has performed well in the three previous major tournaments. Then, of course there is Jack Nicklaus. Since his stunning victory in the Masters, no one is counting him out of anything.

Shapcott scrambles on and leads the parade

By John Hennessey

For all her modesty and self-effacement, Susan Shapcott, aged 16, of Bristol, continues to dominate the English women's stroke-play championship, sponsored by National Westminster Bank, at Broadstone.

In wretched conditions of first, fierce wind, then driving rain for most of yesterday, utterly at variance with the sunshine of the day before, she had a second round of 75, two over the nominal par, for a total of 148.

This placed her four shots ahead of Sandra Catford (née Hallett) a Kent county player who also had a laudable 75 yesterday, on vacation from Lamar University in Texas. Wearing spectacles and lacking the services of a caddy, Miss Shapcott was severely handicapped when the rains came at the eighth hole. Since she had started uncertainly with three fives, one over par, when she might have expected to be one under, one had fears for her, but she showed great resource for one so young.

She reached the turn in 38, still one over, having traded a four at the short six with a birdie three on the previous hole, where she drove the 255-yard green but thereafter, she departed only once from par. Another short hole, the 11th, frustrated her with a

bunker, but on either side of that disappointment she scrambled like a trooper to save par. She knew no more alarms, and might have hoped for something better than par figures at the 13th, 16th and 17th.

Mrs Catford, so recently married that she appeared in the programme under her maiden name, did indeed secure birdie fours at the 16th and 17th to share with Susan Shapcott (the younger of two sisters in the field) the best score of the day. At both holes she chipped to 15 feet and holed the putts characteristically for she is an aggressive putter and the sauntered greens well suited her. Her husband, Chris, like herself, is a member of the Kent county team, having been reinstated as an amateur after two frustrating years as a professional.

Miss Saunders had an extraordinary round, out in 43, with two shots dropped at both the first and fourth and home in 34, with a sparkling eagle at the 16th.

LEADING SCORES: 148: S Shapcott, 75, 73; S Catford, 77, 75; A Saunders, 75, 78; 156: J Walker, 74, 81; S Moorcroft, 79; A Shapcott, 75, 80; M-J Cornelius, 77, 78; L Hackney, 80, 77; L Newton, 77, 80; N Wray, 80, 77; 158: L Fletcher, 78, 80; L Chester, 75, 83; P Smith, 77, 81; 159: D Christison, 80, 79; S Lowe, 80, 79. Seniors championship: (over 36 holes): 161: C Bailey, 79, 82.

YACHTING

Turmoil and drama take gilt off Howison win

By Barry Pickthall

The fifth day of Cowes Week, sponsored by Sandhurst, was filled with drama as one yacht was dismantled and an injured crewman on another entry having to be airlifted to hospital after being knocked out by the boom during a crash gybe.

The day began well enough with the class one entries competing for the Camrose Memorial Trophy providing a spectacular sight for onlookers lined along Cowes esplanade. The vessels set off in sunshine with Prince Philip's chartered Yeoman XXVI making most of the Force 3 southerly breeze on the initial reach across the harbour entrance.

The spectacle soon turned to turmoil however as the fleet, still bunched together, closed on the first gybe mark. First, hydraulics tensioning the rigging on Chris Dunning's Marionette failed. Boxed in by other boats her crew, who had been alone in setting a spinnaker on this first leg, were forced to gybe round with the others, and as they did so the unsupported mast crashed over the side. Moments later, the second

drama of the day occurred at the next mark, during a dispute over right of way between Tim Herring's Backlash and Blazer. As the two boats closed on the mark, Backlash's boom swept perilously close to Blazer. Peter Nelson, the helmsman, swung hard to avoid a collision but in doing

Cup, was provisionally placed third last night, but faces disqualification along with Pacer following complaints from the Southampton harbour master that the two yachts allegedly interfered with the passage of SS Demeria, a large tanker entering Southampton water. Prince Philip, competing in his last race this year, finished the day fourth on the water, but dropped to tenth on handicap. Honours in class two went to Jacobite, whose crew gained a clear win over Bathsheba (Sir Maurice Laing) with Countdown third. The Spears, the South African entry and winner of the first three races, which has been forced to change its name to Hiker to avoid protest under Rule 26 regarding sponsored names for next week's three-quarter ton cup, was fourth.

Richard Beales's Local Hero II, the star performer in class three, failed to finish yesterday ending a string of four wins, a record now equalled by Roger Eglin's Fruseli II in the Sonsta class and Eric Williams's Dragonfly in the Dragons.

Ernest Juer's Fair Lady, winner of Tuesday's Britannia

SPORT IN BRIEF

No danger of boycott

Pakistan, the world and Olympic hockey champions, yesterday confirmed their participation in the World Cup tournament, starting in London on October 4 (Sydney Friskin writes). Akram Shaheed, the Press attaché of the Pakistan High Commission, said that the Government of Pakistan at Islamabad had not even discussed the question of a boycott.

The Pakistan hockey squad are in training, having recently concluded a tour of Europe. They will defend their title at the Asian Games tournament in Seoul, the final of which is to be played on September 29; then they will fly to London for their first World Cup match against Argentina on October 4.

The World Cup organizers announced yesterday that Seiko had been appointed the official timers and had become the third big sponsor. Seiko will present a watch to the best player of the tournament and of the final itself.

Title on line

Duke McKenzie, the European and British flyweight champion, has been ordered to defend his European Boxing Union title against Giampiero Pinna, of Italy. McKenzie, from Croydon, stopped Charlie Magni at the Wembley Arena in May.

Cupboard bare

Worthing Bears have been forced to pull out of the Carlsberg National Basketball League after failing to find a sponsor. The Sussex club need a cash injection of around £25,000 to maintain their position as one of the country's top teams, but no one has come forward. Chris Smith, their chairman, has written to the English Basketball Association to say Worthing will cease to be members from next season. Worthing reached the semi-finals of the national cup competition last season and took part in the Wembley play-offs in 1984-85.

Wheel change

Paul Curran, England's Commonwealth cycling champion, will take part in next month's world championships in Colorado following an about-turn. The cyclist from Thornaby, aged 25, who rides for Manchester Wheelers, won two gold medals at the Edinburgh Games. He was persuaded to travel to America by a British Cycling Federation official after he had withdrawn from the six-man squad.

Twin signing

The Australian rugby players, Peter Smith, a prop forward from Illawarra, and Bob Morris, a hooker from Taree United, have signed for Leeds Rugby League club. They will replace the Great Britain Test forwards, Jeff Grayson and David Ward, who have retired.

Top of League

Wigan Rugby League Club could be the first to top the £1 million turnover mark in either England or Australia within the next two years. This was claimed by the Wigan vice-chairman, Maurice Lindsay, when he disclosed that the Central Park club had record profits of £130,878 for the two seasons between 1983 and 1985, only three years after the club was on the brink of financial collapse.

Derby date

Steve Davis heads a 120-strong field chasing a £60,000 first prize in the £300,000 Dulux British Open snooker tournament, which will reach its climax at the Assembly Rooms, Derby, on March 1.

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